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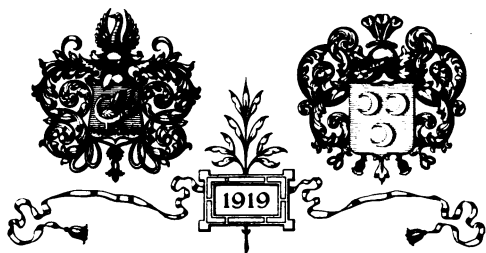
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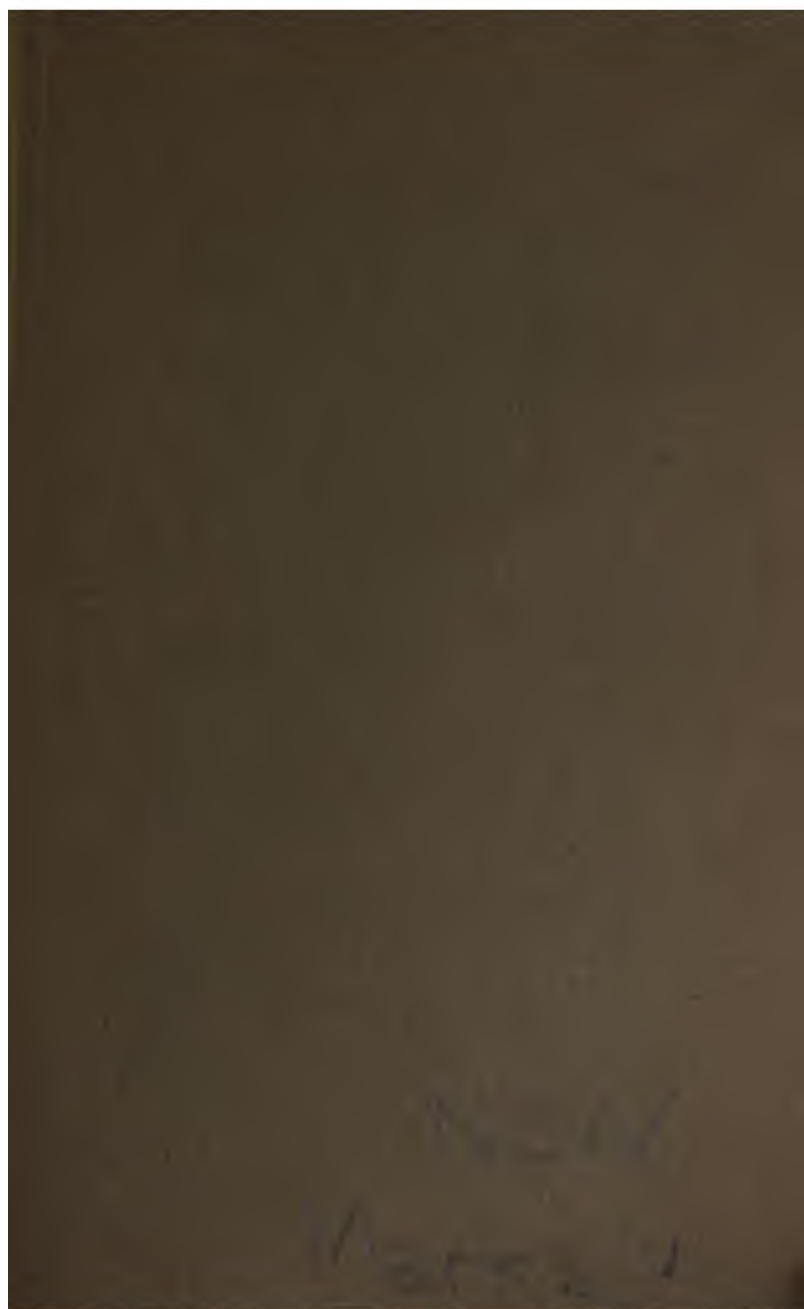
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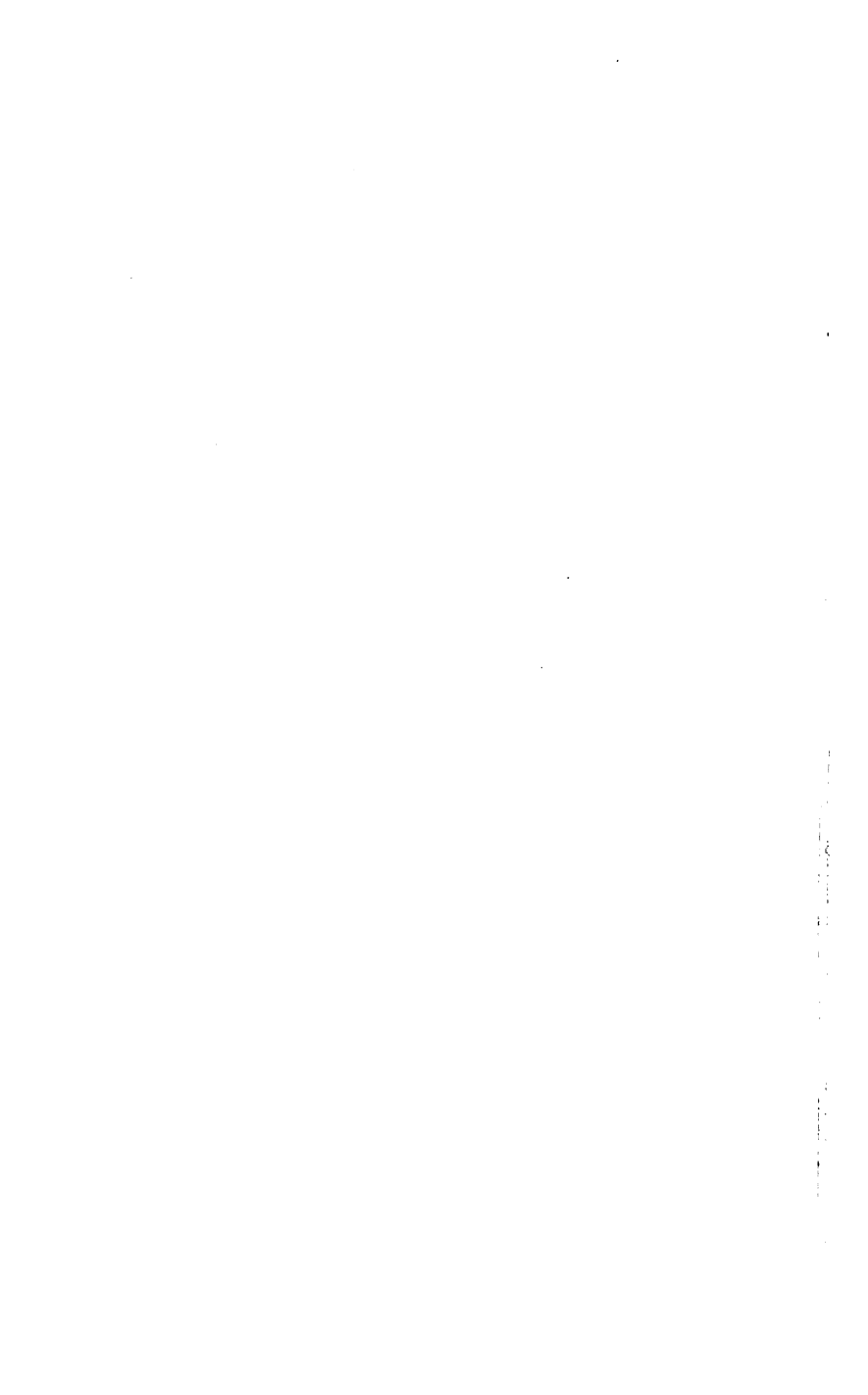
BY VICTOR HUGO PALTSITS

under the terms of the last will and testament of

CATHERINE GANSEVOORT LANSING

*granddaughter of
General Peter Gansevoort, junior
and widow of the
Honorable Abraham Lansing
of Albany, New York*





A GREAT TREASON



A GREAT TREASON

A Story of the War of Independence

BY

MARY A. M. HOPPUS Marks.

. . . And some to shame
and everlasting con-
tempt.

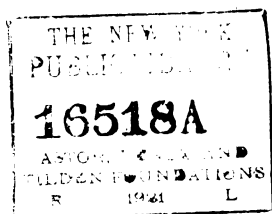
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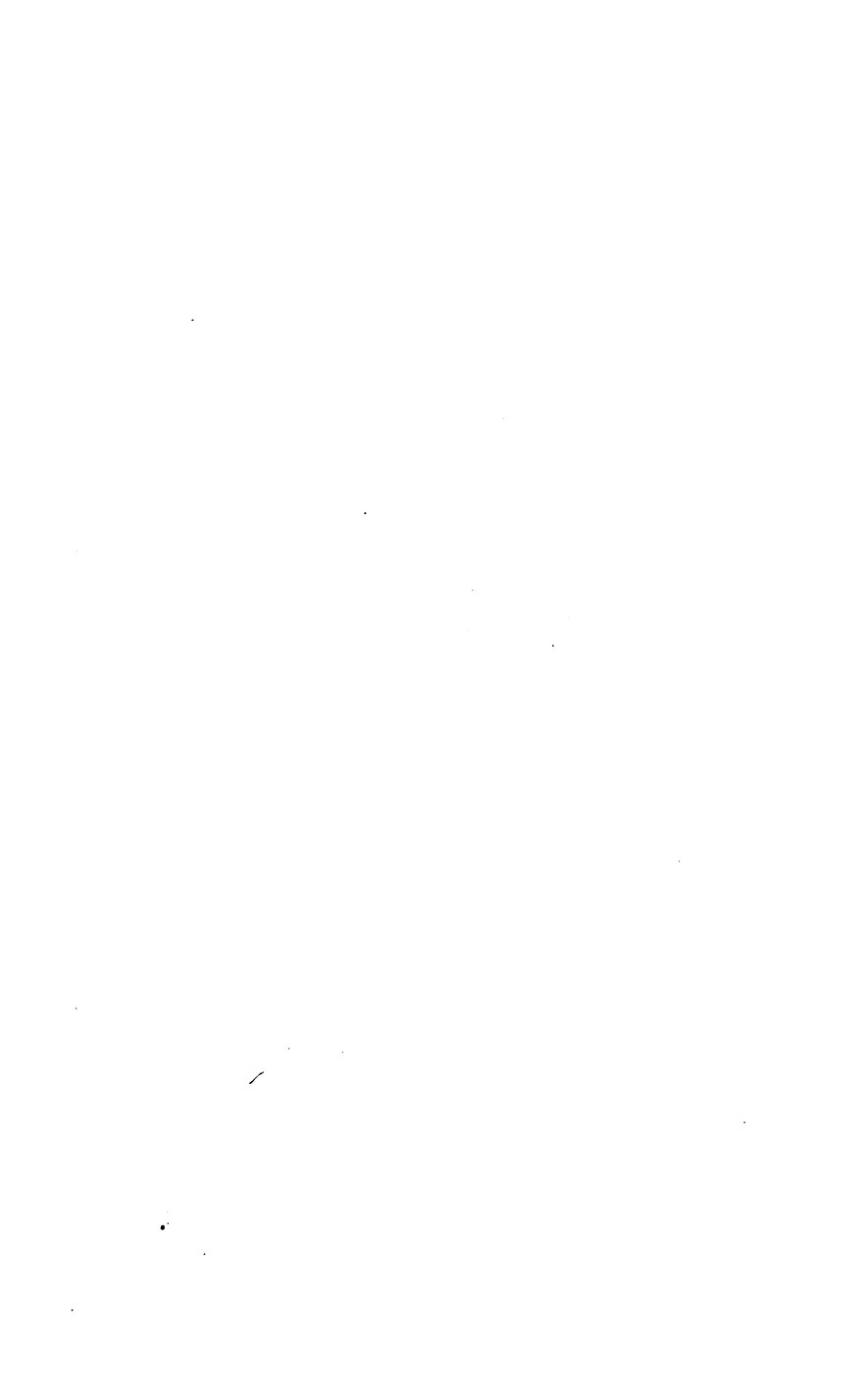
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A GREAT TREASON.

CHAPTER I.

THE DAY AFTER SARATOGA.

CAPTAIN DIGBY's skull was of uncommon strength, and he soon managed to collect his scattered senses sufficiently to take advantage of the darkness which was rapidly spreading over the field, and endeavour to regain the British camp.

It was midnight when he reached his quarters, his face covered with blood and dust, his whole body bruised and sore, and his mind so confused and bewildered, that he could not shake off the constantly-recurring idea that he was in a very disagreeable dream—from which, however, it was impossible to awaken.

That was a terrible night. General Fraser lay dying in a room at Taylor's. He was to have dined there with the Riedels, after the reconnaissance! The Baroness had to clear away her dining-table, already laid, to make room for his bed—expecting every moment to see her own husband brought in in like manner. As the hours of the night wear on, and old Simon Fraser's forfeited coronet grows dim to his son's failing eyes, the Baroness (hushing her children in a corner, that they may not disturb him) hears him say to himself,—“Poor General Burgoyne! oh, my poor wife! oh, fatal ambition!” Mr. Brudenel, the chaplain, reads prayers to him. At three in the morning, they say he cannot last long, and the Baroness takes her children downstairs, and spends the rest of the night trying to comfort Lady Harriet Ackland, who is in an agony about her husband. Poor Fraser lingers till eight in the morning—sending many times to apologise for all the inconvenience he is causing her in being so long in dying.

As soon as poor General Fraser has been laid out, the ladies and children return to the room. The living cannot spare much space to the dead; the house is crowded with wounded officers.

The Baroness does what she can for them—but the cannonade has begun again, and every one is saying, We must retreat this very night.

Captain Digby, who had refused to return himself as wounded—protesting that all he wanted was some sticking-plaister—had lain down to snatch a little sleep. It seemed to him that he had but just forgotten himself, when he was awakened by some one shaking him pretty roughly, and, starting up as hastily as his stiffness allowed him, found that his disturber was a sergeant of his old regiment, who, with his head enveloped in bandages, and one arm in a splint, looked very much the worse for wear.

"Beg your honour's pardon," said the man, saluting; "but Lieutenant Perkins, he's been very bad all night—the doctors say he can't last, and he's very wishful to see you, sir. I've been here once afore, but you was a-sleeping so sweet, I hadn't the heart to wake you. But the Lieutenant, he's a-gettin' impatient, and the doctor told me to go for you, so I hope your honour will be good enough to excuse——"

"Of course! of course! Where is he?" cried Fred, struggling stiffly to his feet and beginning to put on his coat.

The Lieutenant was lying in a kind of outhouse, close by Taylor's, where General Fraser lay dead. His face was pinched and drawn. He had been shot through the lungs, and his breath came in short gasps.

"Digby,"—he said, holding out one of his restless hands to his friend, "it's all up with me."

"Don't talk like that," replied Fred, greatly affected; "you mustn't give up——"

Poor Perkins smiled a ghastly smile. "Don't you hear how I'm breathing?" he said. "The old church-clock at home used to creak just like that, when it was running down. I'm running down, Digby. I wouldn't have minded if we'd beat 'em; and yet 'tis strange how peaceful I feel—I bear 'em no ill-will. 'Do your duty, my dear boy,' says my poor father, when he took leave of me, 'to your God and your King'—and if we'd only beat 'em, Digby——"

"My dear fellow, don't distress yourself—we shall beat 'em yet," cries Digby.

"Not with this army," says the dying man sadly, "and you know it, Digby. This army's doomed. Poor General Burgoyne! I said we was in a mess, you know. They won't believe it in England."

"I can't believe it myself!" cried Fred, his voice hoarse and broken—"it seems like a nightmare! We was all jubilation only t'other day. But Clinton *must* be close to us—if we can but hold on a few days——"

"I shall not be here to see," said the poor young fellow; "but you may live to go home to England——"

Then he began to talk of his father and mother, and made Digby take a solemn oath to go himself and see them, and tell them how he died.

"Write to them for me," he said; "write as soon as I am dead, if you can. But if you live to get home, you must go and see them."

Digby listened with the most careful attention to all the messages his dying friend gave him, and tried desperately hard to remember the names of the nine brothers and sisters, to each of whom poor Perkins sent a separate message.

"Be sure and tell 'em I remembered 'em all, and mentioned all their names," he said; "but whatever you do, don't forget to tell Susan I thought of her at the last; she's my youngest sister, and we was always uncommon fond of one another. Remember—Susan—I used to call her black-eyed Susan—but her eyes is just the same colour as mine."

The Lieutenant said a great deal more than this, and repeated the most important parts many times over; but it was easy enough to see that his life was fast going out of him.

"The doctors said I wasn't to move," he said wearily; "but I'm so uneasy—and it makes no difference. Perhaps if you was to shift me a little—a little higher——"

As Fred did it, a tear dropped from his eye on to the dying man's face.

"It may be best as it is," whispered the poor lad, pressing his friend's hand, and fixing his patient eyes on his; "but I shouldn't like 'em to forget me. If we'd beat, I should have liked to have a tablet put up in the church—there's one to a Captain that fell at Minden—'In the arms of victory,' it says——"

"There shall be one, if I put it myself!" says Fred, his tears coming faster at this; "and as for victory, I don't believe as there was ever a harder-fought battle than yesterday's——"

"Tell my father that," says Perkins, closing his eyes; then opening them again for a moment he adds,— "If you're sent to General Clinton, Digby, be sure you don't overdo it!"

Just then Mr. Brudenel, the Chaplain to the artillery, came

in to pray with the dying man. Digby waited outside, until Mr. Brudenel came out, his eyes very red.

"The poor fellow begged me to desire you to go in to him in five minutes or so," says the Chaplain. "Oh, Captain Digby, what heart-rending sights have I not seen since yesterday!"

Fred waited the five minutes, and then went in, and found his friend lying with so natural and peaceful an expression in his eyes, that he did not see for a moment that the soul had gone out of them.

Captain Digby closed his friend's eyes, and cut off some locks of his hair—to be carried to that Northamptonshire village, if he should ever set foot on English ground again. And then, before he had well finished these last offices of friendship, a hasty message came for him to go instantly to headquarters.

Worn out with fatigue and anxiety, the unfortunate General had been persuaded to take a few moments' rest, and had fallen asleep on a bench. As Fred entered he started up, hastily asking what was the matter? Fred never forgot the terrible anxiety in his face, or the expression of relief, as General Phillips said—

"'Tis only Captain Digby, sir; you ordered him to be sent for."

* * * * *

They bury General Fraser at six that evening, in the great redoubt, according to his last request to Burgoyne, and—according also to that request—without any pomp. Only Burgoyne, Phillips, Riedesel, and the officers of his own family, stand round the grave—while the shots from the enemy's guns plough up the ground, and sprinkle Mr. Brudenel with dust as he reads the service; the Baroness hears his voice, rising solemnly above the cannonade, as she watches just below—in terror lest one of the balls should strike her husband. And so Burgoyne, his heart nearly broken for the loss of his beloved friend, leaves him on the dark hill-top and instantly begins his retreat—bitterly deploring Fraser, and talking of that masterly retreat he made in the Seven Years' War, with only five hundred Chasseurs, in the sight of the whole French army.

But, as has been agreed, Captain Digby, in the disguise he had so carefully rehearsed with poor Perkins, slips away in the darkness, and happily getting past one of the enemy's pickets, is well on his way before the rain comes on—which it soon does in torrents. He is to make for Albany with his utmost speed, charged with a verbal message to Sir Henry Clinton, that unless General Burgoyne be instantly relieved, there will be nothing for him but surrender.

CHAPTER II.

A MESSENGER OF EVIL TIDINGS.

WHILE General Gates was thus covering himself with glory at Saratoga, Lord Cornwallis and the British Grenadiers were marching into Philadelphia.

Ever since Captain Digby's departure for Canada, to join the Northern expedition, there had been a conviction, among the military authorities in New York that now the rebellion would collapse; and the first news from Canada confirmed this opinion. Meanwhile Sir William Howe had opened his own campaign, and Lord Cornwallis's successful skirmish at Quibbletown, in June, was looked on as only the prelude to the occupation of Philadelphia—and gave occasion to Captain André to observe to Miss Digby, that her brother had perhaps been in too great a hurry to snap at the Northern campaign, since we was like to have quite as pretty a victory here, without going all the way to Canada for it.

But Mr. Washington was to be neither provoked nor enticed into leaving his strong position on the hills by Middlebrook, so Sir William returned to Amboy, and prepared to embark—where for, was a question which kept the provinces in terror, from Boston in Massachusetts to Charleston in South Carolina, for many a week after his transports had disappeared off the Capes of Delaware. The whole country held its breath. The eagles were hovering somewhere in the heights of the sky—but the eye could not follow them, nor guess where they would swoop down! Was Sir William going to help Burgoyne? Or to lay waste the Carolinas once more? Or—and this was the most likely guess—was Philadelphia's own hour come at last?

Great were the searchings of heart, and packings of household goods—the comings and goings—the flying rumours—the panics—and perhaps, the secret rejoicings—that August in Philadelphia. General Washington came in from the camp once or twice, and dined on one occasion with Congress—some members of which may have felt a little uneasiness in meeting his eye. There was, however, at this dinner so interesting a guest, that if the intriguers did not look often at Washington, no one would have observed it—the young Marquess La Fayette

was there, whose father fell at Minden, and who had just come over from France, to offer his sword to the cause of Liberty.

General Branhholm had made arrangements—in which Mr. Marshall had much assisted him—for sending his wife to a house at Lancaster, if the enemy should threaten the city.

The news of the loss of Ticonderoga had been quickly followed by that of Harkeimer's surprise at Oriskany; and those who had all along secretly favoured the royal cause, now hardly took the trouble to conceal their opinions, and maliciously reminded their Whig neighbours that this was the Year with Three Gibbets—alluding to the three sevens—and advised them to look to their necks. To this, the Whigs would retort by bringing up an old prophecy, attributed to Peden the Prophet, which said that when Three Sevens should come together, a star of the first magnitude would fall from the crown of Great Britain. These dark words of the inspired old Covenanter were pretty much all the Whigs had to bolster up their courage with, while Burgoyne was marching gaily down on the Hudson, and Sir William Howe was advancing on Philadelphia from the Head of Elk. Letters began to be handed about—addressed to Congress, but obviously intended (like some prayers) for all who chose to listen. Lists of names, written in feigned hands, were privately circulated, to show how strong was the King's party in Pennsylvania. And, to complete the discouragement of the Whigs, the only useful result of Sullivan's foolish expedition against the loyalists of Staten Island—was the capture of the papers of the Quakers' Yearly Meetings for the two years last past. These papers made such a revelation of correspondence with the enemy, that the Council of Philadelphia arrested no less than a score of the leading citizens—and, on their refusal to give any promise of allegiance to the United Colonies, packed them off then and there to Staunton in Virginia, quoting the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* as their precedent.

* * * * *

It was just after this that General Branhholm contrived to come in for a hasty interview with his wife—which might, as she knew, be a last farewell.

Mrs. Branhholm next saw her husband one Sunday morning, as he rode along Chestnut Street at the head of his brigade, the long column of General Washington's army coming behind—pioneers with spades and axes, trumpeters, horse and foot, trains of artillery—a ragged rout for the most part, but stepping

out soldierly to the music, and carrying their well-burnished arms like men who knew how to use them. They made a brave show in the unwarlike eyes of the Philadelphians, though the only apology for regimentals were the hunting-shirts of the Virginians, and the sprig of green which His Excellency had ordered each man to put in his cap—to give the troops some sort of uniformity in the eyes of the young French Marquess, fresh from the *Grande Armée*. Bravely they marched; the Whigs began to pluck up heart again as they saw them—especially as the news had just come of Starke's victory at Bennington.

General Branzholm saw his wife, and saluted her and Mary—with a gallant smile, which nearly broke their hearts. There was many such a salute made that day, and many were the eyes that looked their last, to the bray of trumpet and beat of drum, as the columns passed up Chestnut Street, and out to the Wilmington Road. With the artillery, came Jasper, riding on the same side of the street as that on which his mother and cousin stood—so near, indeed, that he spoke to them as he passed. “Keep a good heart, mother,” he cried, smiling cheerily—they could hear no more for the grinding of the artillery-carriage wheels—and then he too rode on up the long straight street, and was gone.

Mrs. Branzholm bore up bravely, till the last ranks of the rear-guard were diminishing specks, far beyond Central Square—and then she fell sobbing on Mary's neck, exclaiming that the lot of women was hard indeed, and wildly wishing herself at Oglethorpe, in those old days of Indian panics, when they might at least have died together.

Two days after this, news came that Sir William Howe had landed in Maryland—then that he had passed the Head of Elk, and was marching straight on Philadelphia. And then, early one morning, the city was awakened by a hollow sound, which rose and swelled, and died away—like the roar of far-distant breakers on a sandy beach; and all who heard it started from their sleep, and listened trembling—for these were the waves of war, which they had so long seen rising higher and higher, and which now were about to overwhelm them at last.

For hours that sound went on—boom—boom. The people gathered in the streets and open spaces, in pale-faced groups, listening and waiting. These groups generally divided by tacit consent into two parties, who stood aloof from each other—

sometimes casting angry or reproachful glances, but seldom exchanging words. It was too late for reproach, and too soon for exultation. Now and then, some one would remark to his neighbour that it must be many miles off; and the neighbour would shake his head, and perhaps observe that sounds in that district did indeed travel far—but add that twenty miles was as much as it could be. And meanwhile the clouds had gathered black and lowering, and about mid-day broke in a furious tempest—heaven's artillery out-thundering the distant battle. Mrs. Branhholm wandered about the house unable to rest a moment; she seemed not to heed the lightning which terrified Mary. It was only in June that Christ Church steeple had been struck; and as the storm came lower and lower, and wrapped the city in cloud and flame Mary thought the Judgment Day could scarcely be more terrible.

The storm ceased before sundown, and every one went out into the streets—longing, and yet afraid, to ask if any news had come. Mrs. Branhholm and Mary put on their calashes and went up Chestnut Street—passing a group in the midst of which Mr. Roberts was complacently nodding his broad brim at a well-dressed man in a laced hat, who seemed to be laying down the law. Mary caught the words, “folly—absolute madness—who but madmen could have ever been so infatuated as to imagine,”—when the clatter of horse-hoofs coming from the direction of the Schuykil made everybody look round, and the next instant everybody set off running after the horseman—who had galloped past, and was turning down Fourth Street. Mary ran too, but Fourth Street was half full of people by the time she got to the *Indian Queen*, where the horseman had drawn rein. The people ran up from all directions, and pressed round the messenger, who seemed a plain sort of countryman, and had evidently ridden hard.

“What news? What news?” cried the little schoolmaster—running up breathless without a hat, and pushing his silver spectacles on to the very top of his wig. “Speak out, man! and speak up so as we can all hear you!”

“Give a man time to wash the dust out of his throat,” returned the messenger hoarsely, as he took a mug of spruce beer from the landlord. “Mine ain’t such good news,” he said, when he had drained it, and was wiping his mouth on his coat-sleeve, “as that I’m in such an everlasting hurry to tell it. I warn’t in the battle myself—but I’ve seen them as was—an’ I’ve

talked to some o' the Quakers as come out at Birmingham an' Dilworth, an' got real mixed up with the Britishers. There's been fightin' off an' on, at the Forks o' Brandywine and Chadds' Ford, since daybreak this mornin'—but there was such a thick fog, one side couldn't hardly make out what t'other side was up to, an' I can't tell you nothin' o' the manoeuvres—but there was some pretty hard poundin' jest above Birmingham Meetin'-House this afternoon—and Gen'ral Washington's been drove back—and the French Markis is wounded—and the roads is all full o' people takin' away their goods."

This messenger of evil tidings had but little to add to this confused account, but he had told enough. There were many wounded—Birmingham Meeting-House was crowded with them, and the Quakers were giving them assistance. "Which," added the messenger, "is mighty well in its way—but ef they hadn't ha' been on the enemy's side, Gen'ral Howe wouldn't ha' been so nigh to Philadelphia as he is this day. Who, I should like to know, showed him the roads, an' kep' back information from our Gen'als—ef not the Quakers?"

At this, there was an angry murmur—overborne instantly by the women eagerly asking if he knew who was hurt? But to this he could give no reply. The French Marquess was shot in the leg, and General Sullivan's division had suffered most—that was all he knew. He had come off on the first horse he could borrow—his own having been impressed for the artillery—and if he had waited, he would not have been able to come at all.

Here a member of Congress, who had been listening quietly for some time, desired the messenger to step inside the inn and speak with him; and it was presently all over the town that Congress was to sit all night, and remove to-morrow to Lancaster.

CHAPTER III.

CAPTAIN DIGBY ARRIVES AT FORT MONTGOMERY.

CAPTAIN DIGBY had the good fortune to escape capture by any of the scouting parties which hung on the skirts of the retreating army; but with his utmost exertions it was not till the second night that, footsore and jaded, he reached Albany. It still rained in torrents—and it was well for him that the urgency

of the message he bore had hitherto made him resist the temptation to take the rest he so much needed. But he felt that weariness was fast getting the better of him, and he began to look about him for a shelter for the night.

It was long after nightfall, and the dark narrow streets were silent and deserted. His footsteps, splashing in the pools of rain, sounded so loud that he expected every moment to hear a casement flung open, and a voice asking—"Who goes there?" But if any one heard him pass, no one cared to look out into the driving rain, to see who it might be. He went on, treading as gingerly as possible, and cursing the deep-gabled houses, from whose eaves the rain spouted down in fountains, half drenching the unwary foot-passenger.

Down a side street, he observed a light streaming out at an open half-door, and, venturing nearer, saw that the place was a kind of tavern. It stood at the end of the street, and all beyond was darkness. A burst of laughter came from within, just as Digby reached the door. He stood still, and listened for a moment.

"If he ain't hangt yet, hangt he will be, just zo zhur's he's a Britisher," a man was saying, with a strong Low-Dutch accent. "Look you, he was gondermned out of his own mout. 'Dack me to Gin'ral Glington,' zays he, uz bold uz brass. He dedn't know uz ther wuz a Gin'ral Glington on our zide, he dedn't! Bud he wouldn't never ha' gonvessed—on'y when they made him zwaller the 'medic, he wuz vooiced vur to bring up the zilver bulled, uz hadt god the ladder inzide it. I sholt ha' liked to ha' zeed him, when he zaw the wrong Gin'ral Glington hadt god holdt of him!"

There was another laugh at this—highly agreeable, as may be supposed, to the eavesdropper outside.

"Arl the same," said another voice, "'tis a tarnation pity as t'other Gen'ral Clinton should ha' taken the Forts, an' ef so be as he was to get up as fur as here, he might spile arl yet."

Captain Digby took the opportunity of retiring from his post of observation, under cover of a hot discussion which followed—but he had heard enough to show him that General Burgoyne's situation was already known, and that the sooner he left Albany behind him the better—while at the same time the hope of very soon falling in with friends made him for a moment forget his weariness.

But two or three more miles of an execrable road, on a

dark and rainy night, convinced him that he was pretty nearly dead-beat ; and when he saw a dim light glimmering at a little distance from the road, up the slope of the hill, he resolved to risk something for a night's rest. Where there was a house, there might be a barn. He still had a lump of raw pork in his pocket, remaining from the slender store of provisions he had brought with him ; and with this and a few hours' sleep he thought he could hold out till he reached the advancing British force. He stumbled up the steep slope—it was much too dark to find a footway, if any there were ; but he was by this time by no means sure that he had so much as kept the high road—even hemmed in as it was by the hilly nature of the country. He cautiously approached the house, which seemed to have no upper storey—as its roof descended almost to the level of the top of the window. Fortunately, the curtain was drawn aside, and a candle was set in the window-sill, where it flickered and guttered so furiously, that it was the light of the fire burning on the hearth which chiefly enabled him to see the interior. It was a large low room, furnished like a kitchen, and with a brick floor. A clock ticked in a corner, and above a large brass-handled press there hung a fowling-piece of a very antique pattern. The usual hams and bags of dried herbs were suspended from the beam. Beside the hearth, stood an arm-chair, with a patchwork cushion, and by it an old-fashioned spinning-wheel. The only living object in the room was a large black cat, which lay comfortably curled up on a narrow many-coloured hearth-rug.

The Captain, shivering and hungry as he was, saw all these homely arrangements with more envy than he had ever felt in the most sumptuous dining-hall he had ever entered, and took a particular interest in a huge yellow pitcher—which, with a gay mug beside it, stood on the dresser, together with a plate of what looked like sausages. Just as Captain Digby was straining his eyes, to see if they *were* sausages, a noise made him draw back, and an old woman, carrying an armful of wood, came in at a door, which he had observed stood open. The old woman, who wore a white cap and a short lindsey petticoat, stepped up to the side of the hearth, and let the wood fall with a rattle which frightened the cat, who instantly took refuge on the chair. Fred saw the old woman stroke the cat, and began to take courage. As he was cautiously leaving the window, the old woman went to the dresser, took up the sausages, and, shak-

ing her head, was evidently about to carry them away. This, Fred thought, looked mightily as though she were alone in the house—and he thereupon made haste to knock at the door. There was no answer.

Perhaps, thought he, the old lady may be deaf; so, first taking off his hat—that he might the more obviously appear as a suppliant—he tried the latch. It was fast—but the noise he made attracted her attention this time, and, in another moment, he heard a trembling voice hurriedly call out,—“Who’s there?”

“Only a poor traveller, mother, who’s got benighted and lost his way,” returned Fred.

“How many of you is there?” asked the old woman from within.

“I’m alone—put your head out of window, and look at me if you’re afraid to let me in first,” said poor Fred, whose teeth were chattering with cold.

The window was accordingly opened, and the old lady looked out, candle in hand; but the wind blew out the candle, and she said peevishly,—“I can’t tell what you’re like, I’m sure; but, as you’re alone, I’ll let you in till my sons come back—they’ll be here directly. I thought you was them.”

As she unbarred the door, Fred anxiously wondered whether this was true, or was merely said *in terrorem*.

Once inside, he began to give the account of himself which he had prepared during many solitary hours of his perilous journey. But first he artfully found out which side the old lady was on, by asking why she had been so afraid to let him in? He had approached the hearth as he said this, and began ostentatiously to dry himself, by way of convincing his hostess that his only object was shelter.

“Why was I afraid?” she said, when Fred had repeated his question. “Why, where do you come from, not to know as the Hessians are comin’, burnin’ all the towns as they go?”

“Then you’re a friend to me, mother,” said Fred, speaking as distinctly as his chattering teeth would allow him. “I’ve got a message from General Gates to General Putnam, and I want to get down to Peekskil—but I’m pretty well wore out with cold and hunger, and if you’ve got a barn you’ll let me sleep in——”

“There’s my son’s bed you can have—I dare to say Zachary won’t come back to-night—if you reely air on a message to

General Putnam"—said the old woman, looking at him doubtfully. "I took you for a Hessian, that a' did, when I first clapped eyes on you. They say they're arl big men—I've seed folks as has seed 'em. But they du say as they've got double teeth all round."

It was probably very fortunate for Captain Digby that his hostess was hard of hearing—it made conversation more difficult indeed, but also very much more safe. Any indiscreet expression was much less likely to catch the old lady's attention—and awkward questions can be answered at the top of one's voice with much greater ease than in one's ordinary tones. Thus, when the old lady asked her guest whether it was true that General Gates had beat the Britishers? Fred was able to shout back that the Britishers was pretty much drove into a corner, that there would be great news before many days—and that he must say no more to any one but General Putnam. He rang the changes on these and a few other phrases as vague, until the old lady imagined she had been told a great deal, and even fancied that a secret had been confided to her—for Captain Digby earnestly impressed upon her, that if she did not wish him and his information to fall into the hands of the Britishers, she must not say a word about him to a living soul. Such an impression did he finally make upon her patriotism and her motherly kindness, that on his refusal to throw down his clothes from the loft where he was to sleep, for her to dry them—on the perfectly true pretext that if he once took them off he would never be able to get into them again—she went to the press, and got out an old suit with which she presented him, assuring him that Zachary would approve of his having it, when he knew the errand he was on.

Before this, however, the Captain had consumed the sausages, which his deluded hostess informed him had been set aside in case Zachary should return to supper. To the Captain's great joy, she added mysteriously,—

"But he said it might be two days afore he come home—how'sever, the candle's there to show him the way."

It appeared that Zachary had been at the battle of Long Island, but had escaped, bringing home with him a cannon ball,—which he had observed lying idle somewhere, and had thought his mother could pound meat with. Zachary, remarked his fond mother, was always full of notions, and the cannon ball—she produced it for her guest's admiration—was an un-

common handy thing, and made the meat a deal tenderer than a common rolling-pin.

Having devoured Zachary's supper, and emptied the pitcher (which contained nothing more heady than buttermilk), Captain Digby climbed up his ladder, and, joyfully divesting himself of his sodden clothes, put on Zachary's habiliments in their stead—thereby making the discovery that that eminent patriot was considerably shorter than himself, but so fully made up for his brevity by his breadth, that the Captain could not honestly say he had lost by the exchange. Meanwhile, to be in a dry skin once more was in itself a luxury so great, that a few inches too many or too few were a very minor consideration indeed. Captain Digby ascertained that the ladder could be drawn up after him, and drew it up accordingly; and, jumping into Zachary's flock-bed, had just time to reflect that the window could not be more than ten or eleven feet from the ground, before he was fast asleep.

Fred awoke in the cold and drizzly dawn—much refreshed, but so stiff, that he feared at first he might be absolutely unable to pursue his journey. He, however, slipped into Zachary's coat, and, with great pain and inconvenience, descended from the loft, having first made sure that his hostess (whom he heard astir below) was talking to no more dangerous companion than her cat. The good woman had prepared for her guest a bowl of hot buttermilk and some generous slices of bread. On seeing him, she burst out laughing.

"Well, *tu* be sure!" she exclaimed, pausing with uplifted spoon, as she stirred the pot on the fire, "now they're on you, they don't look no more like Zachary's nor a rail's like a mop-head! How he would laugh, *tu* be sure! Well, sit by, sit ye by, and eat whilst ye can—I doubt Gen'ral Gates's message'll have to be in a hurry."

Fred observed with great satisfaction that he had so effectually conveyed to his hostess's mind the importance of his mission, that she was disposed to hurry him off; and he took care to second her efforts to speed the parting guest. He scalded himself severely in his haste, but he got clear off before Zachary or any one else appeared.

As he went on, the country seemed strangely deserted, and the replies which he received from the few persons he met (and who were mostly old or infirm) explained this. Governor Clinton was assembling the militia at New Windsor, to oppose the

march of the British. It was with a lively dread of making the same fatal mistake as the unfortunate person whose fate he had heard discussed at Albany, that Digby plodded on—often leaving the road (such as it was) and making detours to avoid towns and villages, where he might have been questioned too closely.

By these necessary diversions, and the extreme caution with which he was obliged to proceed, he lost so much time, that night overtook him when he was, as near as he could guess, ten miles from Kingston. He resolved, however, to push on, as the least danger, now that he must be near friends. Several wagons loaded with household effects had met him during the day; but the Dutch farmers who drove them had only stayed to ask if there was any news from above? and, on Digby's replying that Gates had got the Britishers fast in a trap, had rejoined that if he was not quick, their friends would come and let them out.

Another such wagon came lumbering along, shortly after nightfall. Leading the horses, walked an elderly man holding a lantern, and of him Fred ventured to ask what news from below?

"The Britishers have burnt Esopus," was the reply. "Governor Clinton's coming up after 'em, they say, with a few men as he's got together, an' my son-in-law's joined him—more fool he. What good does he think *he* can do, agin King's soldiers, and men o' war?"

The old fellow went on grumbling to himself, long after he had passed Digby—while a shrill female voice called from the back part of the wagon,—“If you see anything of one Seelah Perry, tell him his wife's gone up to Albany!”

Digby soon after this passed what seemed to be a deserted house, and some way farther on, another. He ate the last morsel of the bread-cake which the old woman had given him at parting, and pushed boldly on for Kingston, which he passed through safely—and, about noon next day, was so happy as to answer the challenge of General Vaughan's sentinels, just above the smoking ruins of Esopus. Sir James Wallace's flying squadron lay in the river (having destroyed the boom at Fort Montgomery), and Captain Digby was at once sent down in an armed sloop to communicate his intelligence to Sir Henry Clinton.

What then was the Captain's astonishment and disgust, on arriving at the camp at Fort Montgomery, and describing General Burgoyne's situation to Sir Henry, in the most moving terms he

was master of, to be coolly informed that 'twas impossible he could do more than send General Vaughan's detachment and Sir James Wallace's squadron as high up the river as possible, to strike terror! He had received no precise orders whatever as to General Burgoyne, added Sir Henry, seeing Captain Digby's blank dismay—had merely been told to act as circumstances should direct; and Sir William Howe wanted all the force that could be safely spared from New York. How could he act in two directions at once? He asked this question somewhat peevishly of Colonel Beverley Robinson, who was present.

"But, sir, General Burgoyne has been counting on your co-operation all along," faltered poor Fred. "We all thought that was the plan; and indeed, sir, if you can't instantly make some very powerful diversion in his favour, he is undone!"

"Zounds, sir! what do you mean by counting on my co-operation?" cried Sir Henry angrily. "D—— it, sir! I don't understand you! Is it my fault if your General has allowed himself to be entangled in the extraordinary manner you describe? When he saw the enemy was in force, why the devil did he cross the Hudson? Plan? There was no plan—I was to do as I could—act with Sir William on Philadelphia, or go northwards, according as things might turn out; but there was no plan. We was left to follow our discretion—and when news comes that General Burgoyne is sweeping the rebels all before him, why the devil should we go to help him? answer me that, sir?"

"We all thought, sir," stammered Fred, "as Lord George Germaine had wrote to the General, that you was to act in concert——"

But at the mention of Lord George, Sir Henry became fairly purple with fury.

He explained, with a great deal of very bad language, that he saw it all now—that this was a plot, and that Lord George was bent on his ruin, to save his own cursed cowardly skin. He cursed his own weakness in having suffered himself to be cajoled out of demanding the satisfaction due to a gentleman, for his garbling his despatch about Sullivan's Island, when he had gone all the way to England to get it—and swore he would have it yet. Meantime, he could do no more for General Burgoyne than he was already doing. Since he left New York, he had received a letter from Sir William Howe, informing him that Mr. Washington had made an ugly attempt to surprise him at Germantown, on the morning of the 4th, and

bidding him be ready to send him six thousand men as a reinforcement, the instant his brother the Admiral should have opened the Delaware.

"So I hope you see, sir," continued Sir Henry—observing the blank disappointment depicted on Captain Digby's countenance—"that 'tis out of the question I can march a force so far beyond Albany. Mr. Washington's army must be much more formidable than was represented to us. Indeed—though Sir William makes as light of this last affair as he can—'tis easy to see that they had a narrow squeak for it. We shall lose Philadelphia next, if I set off on a wild-goose chase after General Burgoyne!"

CHAPTER IV.

A LETTER FROM BOSTON.

WHEN, in after years, Althea Digby looked back on the weeks immediately preceding and following Sir John Burgoyne's catastrophe, she could never quite disentangle the confusion with which the events of that time had succeeded each other. And indeed the inconsequent contradictions of a dream are hardly more perplexing than were the extraordinary alternations of fortune crowded into that brief space of time.

After Sir William Howe had sailed away, leaving Sir Henry Clinton in command at New York, nothing worth mentioning happened for many weeks, except the arrival of news from the North. Captain André was gone with General Gray, whose aide he now was; but Althea observed to Mrs. Maverick that she was afraid he would hardly envy Fred so easy a triumph—though, to be sure, 'twas not likely Mr. Washington's ragged regiments would give much more trouble than these cowardly Northern levies.

It was near a month after this, that the news came that Mr. Washington's ragged regiments had been driven back at the Forks of Brandywine, and that Wayne had been surprised and almost destroyed by General Gray. Just at this time, a rumour first got about in New York (no one knew how), that Sir John Burgoyne had fallen into an ambush. Mr. Justice Jones heard some people talking it over in the street, as he was on his way to call on Mrs. Maverick.

"A pack of gossiping fools! If indeed they aint rather

rebels—as I shrewdly suspect,” said the Judge, when he had mentioned the circumstance. “I threatened ’em with the Provost, if I ever caught ’em again trying to spread false news. And what d’ye think one of ’em has the impudence to reply ? ‘The bloodhound Cunningham’s gone to follow his accursed trade in Philadelphia,’ says the insolent rascal, ‘so I hope we shan’t see honest patriots being murdered here any more, for one while.’ Think of that, Ma’am ! There’s impudence for you ! The fellow ought to stand in the pillory. But here’s Gaine’s *Mercury*, with the account of Lord Cornwallis’s entry into Philadelphia. Quite a triumph, Miss Digby—all the windows full of people dressed in their best—loyal addresses—demonstrations, and I don’t know what. Everybody was delighted to see ’em. A little boy ran up to shake hands with one of the grenadiers. Ah, they know their true friends !”

The next news which came, was that of the battle of Germantown, an affair in which Mr. Washington very nearly indeed got the better of Sir William Howe. But for the fog, which here, as at the Brandywine, hindered the rebels from seeing the advantages they had gained—and, misled by which, they mistook each other more than once for the enemy—but for this, and for the grand mistake of stopping to cannonade Mr. Chew’s house, Philadelphia would probably have been retaken then and there, and Sir William’s retreat cut off. But all is well that ends well. Lord Cornwallis arrived in time, and—though the rebels saved their artillery, and there was no pursuit—was able to claim a victory.

Meanwhile, Sir Henry Clinton had gone up the Hudson, as soon as the reinforcements arrived from England. Having sailed in Dutch bottoms, by the provident care of the Authorities at home, they had been three months on the voyage, and came just too late for Sir Henry’s expedition to save poor General Burgoyne. But no one in New York knew this—nor did any one in the expedition know what news Sir Henry had received, by the messenger who reached him just as he was landing at Howe’s Point. Ill news usually travels apace, but no news whatever had been heard of General Burgoyne since that ugly rumour—which, of course, no one believed. By the time Sir Henry Clinton returned to New York, however, these rumours had grown uglier ; and a few days afterwards a report got all over the town, that General Burgoyne and his whole army had surrendered themselves prisoners-of-war.

Although this was no more than Captain Digby expected,

it may easily be imagined that it much afflicted him. Happening the same day to be passing with several other officers in front of the hospital (where some of the prisoners were confined), he heard a loud voice call out, that "General Burgoyne had marched to Boston to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*,"—and, looking up, saw a very powerfully-built man leaning out of an upper window. Digby's companions swore heartily at this piece of insolence, and had the perpetrator (who was no other than that turbulent rebel, Colonel Ethan Allen) clapped in irons for it.

Long before this, Althea had heard enough from her brother to prepare her for the worst. She had wept heartily as he told her about poor Lieutenant Perkins—whom she remembered in Boston as a mischievous but amiable young fellow, with usually some practical joke on hand. Althea shed tears, too, when Fred—with a few slight extenuations, but truthfully in the main—narrated his unintentional single-combat with Noel Branhholm, of the issue of which he was of course ignorant.

Among all these exciting alternations of fortune, one event, however, stood out distinct in her memory—like a monument of pain. One of the irregular posts, which kept up some kind of inter-communication between New England and the Southern Provinces, brought Mrs. Maverick a letter from a friend in Boston. It arrived one afternoon in November. It had been nearly three weeks on its way, and was dated October 17—the very day, if the writer had but known it, of the Convention of Saratoga. Mrs. Maverick's correspondent was a lawyer, and an old crony of her late husband's. He had espoused the popular side, but had continued to manage her affairs, and great part of the letter was taken up with details as to how he had been attending to her interests in her absence—how he had let her house in King Street to a family whose own residence in Charlestown had been destroyed—and how he had brought influence to bear on Mr. Hancock, to prevent the sequestration of certain property of hers at Cambridge.

"We hear the most conflicting reports from Canada," added the writer, when he had thus given an account of his stewardship,—“nothing less than the total destruction of one or other army. Fortune seems to be playing at see-saw with us. No sooner did we hear that Ticonderoga was abandoned without a blow struck, and St. Clair run away into the woods, than there comes news of Starke's victory at Bennington. And close on the heels of our reverses (as you must let me call them) on the

Delaware, we hear that Gates and Arnold have fought a great battle by the Hudson, and cut off Burgoyne's retreat. You would scarce know Boston—'tis true the streets are no longer deserted—but we are for ever asking each other what's the news from Canada, from New York, from Philadelphia? I heard an anecdote t'other day, will do for your next tea-drinking—'tis authentic. Mr. J——n A——s, riding over Boston Neck, meets a horse-jockey, who, recognising our little great man, cries, out of the fulness of his heart,—‘Oh, Mr. A——s! what great things have you done for us! we can never be grateful enough—there's no Courts of Justice now in this Province, and I hope there never will be another!’ Which mightily disconcerts Mr. A——s, who, being a lawyer himself, had never, you may swear, intended this. Admit 'tis magnanimous in me to tell it you—but indeed, 'tis too rich a morsel to be lost. Mr. A——s's name brings me to a sadder topic. I met poor Mr. Lawrence Fleming this morning; he had just heard that his nephew was killed at Germantown—where we was within an ace of regaining Philadelphia. He was killed in a desperate attempt to bring off the guns. His men rescued him—dead or dying. This is all that is known as yet—only 'tis certain he is dead. The poor old gentleman cried like a child, as he told me. 'Tis a great loss to us. Mr. Jasper Fleming was a very promising young man, of a singular cool judgment for one so young, and was much beloved and respected by all who knew him. Mr. Fleming senr. referred in very moving terms to your kindness to his poor nephew, when he was a prisoner. Mr. Branhholm is with General Arnold—was well when last heard off. This will be a sad blow to him.” Althea came into the room just as Mrs. Maverick had read thus far, and found her in tears. “Read this, child,” said the old lady, holding out the letter. “'Tis from Mr. Gosforth. Poor Mrs. Branhholm! I'm sure my heart bleeds for her! To think that this dreadful rebellion should come to this!”

At the mention of Mrs. Branhholm's name, Althea had turned very pale. She did not take the letter, but walked with unsteady steps to a chair, and sat down. A mist was before her eyes. She thought her cousin was speaking, but she could not distinguish any words—though the jingling of wagon-bells and the cracking of a whip smote painfully on her ear from the street. She was not given to fainting, but she felt as though she were sinking in a roaring sea. By this time, Mrs. Maverick had wiped her eyes and her spectacles, and turned to look at

Althea. "'Tis not Noel, child," she said hastily, observing her pallor. "At least"—she added, "nothing has been heard of him, and no news is good news. 'Tis poor Mr. Fleming that's killed. How terribly cut up his brother will be, when he hears of it!"

"If you please, Mis' Maverick, Penelope say, you please step down jes' one minute, 'bout dat tukkey," said the small black boy who acted as page to the establishment—and who, whatever the nature of the announcement he made, grinned with equal satisfaction, and opened the door with the same joyous flourish.

Now Mrs. Maverick had invited Mr. Justice Jones and Colonel Beverley Robinson to supper that night. The reinforcements for Philadelphia were to start next morning, the Delaware being now open; and as Captain Digby had lost his regiment by the Convention, Sir Henry Clinton was good-naturedly sending him to General Howe with a request that he would do something for him; and Fred had easily persuaded Mrs. Maverick and his sister to go with him. Mrs. Maverick's little supper was therefore a farewell entertainment, and the turkey had been much on her mind. "Dear, dear! I suppose if I don't go, she'll manage to spoil it!" she exclaimed, putting her spectacles on upside down, in her distraction between the public and private calls upon her attention. "Read it yourself, my dear—I'll be back again in five minutes." So saying, she put the letter into Althea's hand, and kissed her cheek. "Bless me, how cold you are, child! I don't wonder you are upset—this is sad news indeed. I'm sure I got as fond of him, poor fellow, as though he had been my own flesh and blood."

When she had gone, Althea looked at the letter, but it was some time before her trembling hands could hold it steadily enough for her to find the place—the words danced before her in sick confusion. She tried to fix her mind on her cousin's words, "'Tis poor Mr. Fleming that's killed," as giddy dancers fix their eyes on some immovable point. And all the while, the only clear thought in her mind was that Jasper had been dead a month—six weeks—and she had not known it—and the world had seemed the same!

She sat thus for a few minutes, and then went up to her room—on her way passing the window whence she had so often looked towards Long Island, because Jasper Fleming might be there. She locked her door, and fell on her knees by her bedside, by the impulse which moves most of us to that attitude,

when we are staggering under some burden too heavy for our hearts to bear. The few tears she shed were so hot that they only scorched her eyelids, and left the weight at her heart as heavy as ever.

Then, with a desperate struggle with her own anguish, she told herself that she had not loved him—that no word of love had ever passed between them—that he had been not only her country's enemy (enemies had loved before then), but a rebel—and rebel was a shameful name. "No! not shameful!" she cried aloud, half-starting from her knees. "If he was mistaken, 'twas an honest error—and now that he has atoned for it so dearly, even I may surely own that his death was heroic—and, as he thought, for his country!" As she said this, Althea found her cheeks suddenly wet with a rain of tears, which seemed to have all fallen in a moment, like the drops of mountain storms. They did not much relieve her, but she presently remembered that if she could not weep, perhaps she could pray. "But oh, my God! what shall I pray for?" she thought; "unless I ask that I may die too!" But as this bitter cry went up from her heart, she thought of Jasper's mother, of Noel, and of Mary, and prayed for them; and afterwards, as she recalled the days in Boston, she acknowledged the pride which had chiefly embittered them. And thinking these meeker thoughts, and praying these unselfish prayers, her grief grew gentler, and could be partly expressed by tears.

* * * * *

Mrs. Maverick, having seen the turkey comfortably settled on the spit, returned to the dining-parlour. As she opened the door, the draught took the letter which Althea had left on the table, and wafted it to her feet. "Poor girl!" said the old lady, taking it up, and feeling a wet spot upon the paper. "She has a warm heart, for all her high spirits. Any one can see with half an eye that she's not indifferent to Noel Braxholm—but 'tis perhaps as well now that she never admitted his addresses; though, to be sure, things may come round yet."

Althea unlocked her door at her cousin's knock, and then, turning to the glass, began to smooth her ruffled hair with hands which trembled visibly.

"After all, my dear, it might have been Noel," said the old lady, sitting down in the dimity arm-chair.

"I daresay Jasper was quite as dear to his mother," said Althea in a low voice.

"She thought the world of him—she often told me so," observed Mrs. Maverick—with a prompt adoption of the past tense, which smote Althea to the heart. "And if he had not been a rebel, I think there's no doubt but he might have been made a judge one day. 'Tis a great pity he should have thrown away his life like this. I used to fancy he had something on his mind—I wonder if it was his cousin Mary. Poor fellow, he was very patient when he was ill, and always had something witty to say. I remember one day when I told him he was patient, he said he could be ill-humoured enough for that matter, but for feeling 'twas unfair to be naughty, when he knew I was too generous to punish him."

Fred was much affected on learning the news. Jasper was, he declared, the cleverest fellow he had ever met—next to Jack André—and it was a d——d shame he should have been sacrificed. He added that no one who had never found himself in the act of cutting down his own particular friend, knew what this cursed war was; and, for his own part, he could not understand why we did not patch it up with the rebels, and turn our arms against the French—our natural enemies, whom it was at once a duty and a pleasure to fight. As for this slaughtering one's own flesh and blood, it might suit Rodgers, and De Lancey, and the Butlers, but he should be glad to have no more of it. At the same time, Captain Digby observed that few things would give him such unalloyed pleasure, as attending the execution of Mr. Hancock, Sam Adams, and his cousin, and several other members of Congress whom he named—after which he was convinced that the rest would listen to reason, and everybody might be happy.

CHAPTER V.

FALSE ALARMS.

THE rebel vales, the rebel dales,
With rebel trees surrounded,
The distant woods, the hills and floods,
With rebel echoes sounded.

THE BATTLE OF THE KEGS.

To all loyal persons then in Philadelphia, the winter which followed the occupation of that city by the British army was the most delightful of their lives. In return for the comfortable

quarters which they found there, the British officers exerted themselves to make things lively, with a zeal which, had it been exerted in a military direction after the battle of Long Island, would probably have crushed that rattlesnake of rebellion which had so imperfectly learned that it must "UNITE OR DIE." The zeal, however, much outran the discretion. Besides the legitimate entertainments of banquets, balls, and theatrical performances, a house was opened where there was dancing once a week, and gaming every day—with a chess-board or two in a corner for the sobersides. There was a deal of swaggering about the streets, and the taverns were crowded with officers and gentlemen who, when a little in their cups, would awaken the far-echoing streets of the Quaker City, by roaring at the tops of their voices—"God save great George our King!"

Nor was this the worst offence offered to the shade of William Penn—cocks were fought, bears and badgers were baited, and improper persons—attired in the colours of the regiment whose officers they honoured by their regard—drove openly down the line whenever there was a review.

Mr. Washington meantime, contrary to the advice of Congress, who, having good fires to write their letters by, did not see what an army wanted with huts for the winter, had insisted on going into winter quarters—which he had accordingly done at Valley Forge, a rugged valley only twenty miles north-west from the city. Here he and his men slept on the bleak hill-sides, in frost and snow, with about half a blanket each to cover them, and a pair of shoes to every three men or so; and dined on a salt herring, or a few potatoes—while Congress intrigued zealously with Gates and Conway, and tried to bribe Lafayette into abandoning Washington's party, by the offer of a command against Canada.

At last—the General's patience and rations being alike exhausted—he wrote—not to resign, as some of them had hoped to starve him into doing—but to observe that soldiers were not stocks or stones, but, like other men, required clothes and food—though they could now dispense with the soap which he had asked for six months ago, as they had now very few shirts left to wash. His Excellency further remarked, that it was highly impolitic to seize cattle by force—especially as he had only paper money to pay for them with; but that if his men were not fed somehow or other they would mutiny. At the same time, he begged to assure Congress that it was very consider-

ably easier to draw up remonstrances in a comfortable room, than to sleep without blankets on a snowy hillside.

Even Congress was a little ashamed, and began to think it had perhaps better not go too far, in trying to stir up a clamour against General Washington for the loss of Philadelphia. A little before this, Mr. Wilkinson (now a Brigadier) had blabbed some of his master's secrets to Lord Stirling's aide—and in particular had quoted a certain passage from a letter which Conway had written to Gates at Albany. On this coming to His Excellency, he wrote and told Conway what Wilkinson had said. Whereupon the whole cabal collapses like a burst bubble, and every one of the conspirators (except Conway) hastens to swear that he never said anything—never meant anything by what he did say—and is, in fact, more innocent than the babe unborn. Gates, in particular, piteously beseeches His Excellency to help him detect the wretch who has thus traduced him—and wildly asks Wilkinson who can have betrayed him? to which Wilkinson suggests that possibly Colonel Troup may have got talking with Major Hamilton, when he was in Albany in October.

Meantime, while the owners of the houses were shivering in their huts out at Valley Forge, the junketings went on briskly in Philadelphia—agreeably diversified by two or three sorties, and a good many skirmishes, outpost affairs, and foraging-parties—in most of which the Queen's Rangers had a conspicuous share—but none of which had any important result. Philadelphia resounded to martial strains, and one could not go out of a morning, without seeing the Highlanders exercising in the streets, with the music of the band spread out on the steps of the nearest house.

Early in the new year, however, there was a mighty commotion one morning. Captain Digby's servant rushed in breathless, as he sat at breakfast with Captain André in the latter's quarters, to report that an infernal machine was floating down the Delaware, and had already blown up two boys, who had gone to see what it was.

Captain Digby asked which wharf it was at, snatched his hat and sword, and was off down High Street, with Jack André after him, before the man had finished his story. Arrived on the wharf, they found an excited crowd watching some kegs, which were slowly drifting down stream. Presently Sir William Howe himself appeared on the scene, and ordered the

kegs to be fired at—on which many of the civilians hastily retired.

“What are they all afraid of?” asked André of Captain De Lancey, who just then came up from the water’s edge. De Lancey replied that so far as he could see they were kegs, with nothing extraordinary about them; but that some people declared they had seen bayonet-points through the holes, and others that the kegs were full of rebels. At this André laughed heartily, and vowed that the good folks of Philadelphia had been reading of the wooden horse of Troy, and had got their heads turned.

The rebels made themselves very merry over this alarm, with which their spies soon made them acquainted. They called the affair the “Battle of the Kegs,” and celebrated it in verses, which they sang around their watchfires to keep themselves warm. They were by this time a little better off—Light Horse Harry of Virginia having captured several droves of cattle, in the marsh-meadows on the Delaware.

It was very unpleasant in Philadelphia for suspected persons; and any one found in the streets without a lantern, between the beating of the tattoo at half-past eight, and the reveille, was examined by the patrols, and locked up, unless he could give a satisfactory account of himself.

Captain Digby fell a victim to this order one snowy night. He had been invited to a card-and-supper-party at Mr. Edward Shippen’s, and Jack André, who was also there, had begun to talk of Canada; upon which Miss Digby had good-naturedly told the company of the journal which the Captain had kept while he was a prisoner, and illustrated with his own hand. He had lent this journal to Miss Digby, and she begged her brother to step round and fetch it. So Fred started off, and while he was gone, the company sat down to a game of basquet.

Mr. Shippen’s family was one of the most respectable in Philadelphia, and he himself was a lawyer of high standing. He had three daughters, of whom Miss Peggy, the youngest, was considered one of the belles of the city. She was only just seventeen, and charmingly vivacious. She had taken a great fancy to Althea—who professed to feel a motherly affection in return, on the strength of being some seven or eight years Peggy’s senior.

This way of talking, and a certain listlessness in Althea’s

manner of late, had brought upon her several lectures from her cousin.

"It is very foolish for a young woman to exaggerate her age," said Mrs. Maverick, on one of these occasions. "People will think you old quite soon enough, without your putting the idea into their heads for them. And let me tell you, Althea, there's nothing so calculated to make a woman lose her youth early, as her imagining she is losing it. Women could keep young a vast deal longer than they do, if they would resolve not to let themselves fancy they are old. I am turned sixty-five, but I protest I don't feel like an old woman yet, and as for you—'tis preposterous! But I know what it all means!"

So saying, Mrs. Maverick glanced at Althea over her spectacles, and shook her head meaningly.

"You have lost your looks a little lately," she continued, as Althea did not speak; "and your spirits have been very uneven; but when you are animated, there are very few young women you need fear as rivals—I don't say it to flatter you. I'm sure, the other day, when you was telling Miss Peggy Shippen about our being insulted by the rebels at Jamaica, no one, to look at you, would have took you for more than two years older than she—and Peggy looks very young, even for her age."

"She is a charming creature," said Althea. "'Twould be a shame that sorrow should ever approach her."

"Tut, tut! always talking of sorrow!" exclaimed Mrs. Maverick peevishly. "I protest you'll soon look like your own grandmother, if you give way to this melancholy! When you first came from England, you was as amusing a companion as I would wish to have, but now—but 'tis easy enough to see what it means! You need not leave the room—I'm not going to talk about Mr. Branhholm—though I *do* think you had much better get him out of your head. Captain André, as any one can see, is——"

But at this point in Mrs. Maverick's lecture, her audience slipped away, and left her to shake her head at the tall chest of drawers in the recess opposite, and which was so highly polished that (the day being bright) it reflected the gleam of her spectacles.

This evening, however, at Mr. Shippen's, no one could complain that Althea was not animated. She and Peggy, ably assisted by Captain André, kept the company so much alive, that no one noticed how long Captain Digby had been in stepping round to Walnut Street, until the servants brought in the supper-trays.

"Why, bless me!" cries Captain André—pulling out his watch and jumping up from the basset-table all in the same moment—"Digby has been gone above an hour! If I may be permitted, I'll just run round and see what he's about."

At this moment, however, the stalwart form of Captain Digby appeared, filling up the doorway. He had the journal under his arm.

"I was stopped for having no lantern," he explained; "and as I had forgot the word for to-night, nothing would do but I must be marched off to the guard-house—and there I waited while they sent to the Captain of the guard, who, being just sat down to the faro-table, did not come for a full half-hour."

The journal, with its coloured drawings of Canadian birds, beasts, insects, trees and plants, sketches of Indians, and illustrations of all sorts, kept the company so late that it was midnight before the ladies put on their cloaks and clogs, to go home through the snowy streets, Captain André escorting Miss Peggy Chew—a very pretty and lively girl in her way, though Althea thought her not to be compared to Peggy Shippen.

CHAPTER VI.

CAPTAIN ANDRÉ PERMITS HIMSELF TO REFLECT UPON HIS SOVEREIGN.

O halcyon days, for ever dear,
When all were happy, all were gay,
When winter did like spring appear,
And January fair as May!

Then laughing Sol went gaily down,
Still brighter in the morn to rise,
And fondly waking o'er the town,
On Britain's Ensign beamed his eyes.

Then all confest the valiant knight
Had learnt in camps the art to please,
Respectful, witty, yet polite,
Uniting fancy, grace, and ease.

VERSES WRITTEN THE WINTER THE BRITISH ARMY
WAS IN PHILADELPHIA.

ALMOST as soon as she reached Philadelphia, Althea had written a letter to Mrs. Branhholm, expressive of her sympathy in the loss she had sustained. It was a great effort to write it; it

cost Althea several sleepless nights, half a quire of letter-paper, and some very bitter tears, and was very short when it was done. She sent it under cover to Mr. Gosforth—but neither letter nor enclosure ever reached its destination.

Whatever our griefs may be, it is impossible that they can weigh on us as heavily, when our attention is being constantly demanded for what is going on around us, as when we have nothing to do but to dwell on them. In the gaieties of that winter, and especially in the society of Captain André, Althea sometimes forgot for a while what it was that made her heart so heavy—but the pain would always come back again, and then she remembered, with a new pang, that Jasper Fleming was dead.

But she was not of a temperament to sink readily into a settled melancholy. Life was strong within her, and she struggled hard. She told herself that it was folly to let her whole life be embittered about what might have been. Perhaps it would be better to listen to Jack André—who certainly needed only the very smallest encouragement to become her suitor. If he had had his romance, as everybody knew, she had once had a vain dream—which but one living soul had ever suspected. They would meet on equal terms, neither wronging the other.

Althea was quite sure that no one had ever guessed her secret—except Mary Fleming. Mary, she believed, had divined it—made wise, perhaps, by a secret of her own. Then there rose up before Althea's eyes a vision of that summer in Virginia—not yet four years ago, but they were all young and joyous then—and now the very world itself seemed to have grown old and gray.

"Mary will marry Noel, and every one will be happy but me!" thought Althea, with a selfish forgetfulness of anybody else's possible sorrows, only extenuated by the exceeding bitterness of a sorrow which cannot be told.

Captain Digby's sanguine anticipations had not been realised. Far from there being any prospect of a reconciliation, party feeling ran higher than ever. Although, ever since his triumph at Saratoga, Gates had been busily engaged in his old intrigues, he had behaved in that crowning event of his life with a delicacy and moderation worthy of an honourable man. Nor was he involved in the complications which followed. No sooner had the captive army reached Cambridge, than everything went

wrong, and each side accused the other of wanton insolence—until feeling ran so high that a riot took place which might easily have led to a massacre.

General Gates had been severely blamed for not making harder terms at Saratoga,—for which, however, Clinton's advance up the Hudson was to be thanked,—and Congress was undoubtedly willing to snatch at any pretext for detaining the Convention troops in America until the end of the war. And pretexts were not wanting. Sir William Howe's proposal to embark the troops at Rhode Island was one of the most unlucky of the many unlucky strokes of British diplomacy, whereby England lost her North American Colonies. Rhode Island was too near New York, and Congress professed to see in this proposal—and in the unseaworthiness of the transports which Sir William assembled there—an intention to repudiate the Convention. It was therefore resolved to detain the troops until a ratification of the treaty could arrive from England—and while waiting for this, there was time to consider that, even should England ratify the Convention, Burgoyne's army sent back to Europe would enable the British Government to send out to America an equal number of troops at present employed on European stations.

The "Old Congress"—allowing the army which was shedding its blood in the field to want the necessaries of life, while it was for ever meddling with military arrangements—appointing Boards of War to control its Generals—and, above all, engrossed in a secret cabal to supersede Washington (not by Gates, as those least deep in the secret imagined, but by Lee, now about to be exchanged) was not a Body pre-eminently deserving to be styled "Honourable." It took care to leave no record of its proceedings, and those who could have told its history came to the conclusion that the less said about it the better, and put their notes into the fire. Such as it was, however, the Old Congress represented the Provinces; and in refusing to acknowledge it or its Generals, the British Ministry had given it the fairest possible excuse for doubting whether faith would be kept with it—but, to be sure, when the King's Commissioners called the rebel Commander-in-Chief, "George Washington, Esquire," they did not dream that a British army would ever surrender to the rebels!

Poor General Elbow-room returned to England on his parole, hoping to accommodate matters. But His Majesty shut

the doors of the presence-chamber against him—and even the satisfaction of a court-martial was refused him, on the ground that he was a prisoner on parole.

Meanwhile, a mighty Ally had appeared for the revolted Colonies. It was perhaps too much to expect that France should lose so excellent an opportunity, of at once embarrassing her hereditary foe, and regaining a footing in America. Turgot learned Burgoyne's catastrophe with joy unfeigned, and before the year was ended, Louis XVI.—careless of the precedent he was setting to servants that break away from their masters—had made up his mind to acknowledge the Colonies, and enter into a commercial Treaty with them.

Just a month before France finally threw off the mask, and announced these intentions, Lord North brought in another batch of Conciliatory Bills.

No words can describe the wrath of the British armies in New York and Philadelphia when, about the middle of April, the rough drafts of these Bills reached Governor Tryon, and were circulated all over the Provinces. There was not a man in either army who did not feel himself personally aggrieved, when he heard that Congress was to be treated with as if it were a lawful authority, the several States to be recognised as independent until negotiations were completed—and even a “reasonable and moderate contribution towards the common defence of the Empire when re-united,” not to be insisted on as a *sine quâ non*! Even this point was to be waived—with the feeble proviso, that in that case the Colonies must not expect support in their turn! In fact, everybody was to be acknowledged, from Congress and General Washington, down to the humblest rebel jack-in-office, and everything was to be conceded.

“Good God, Digby!” exclaimed Captain André, the first time he saw him, after hearing this astounding piece of conciliation. “Ministers are making fools of us!” and then he went on to say some very hard things of Lord George. He even criticised his Sovereign's actions—observing that when His Majesty's royal Grandfather had taken the trouble to scratch Lord George's name off the list of Privy Councillors with his own hand, for his poltroonery at Minden, 'twas an act of little less than impiety to reinstate him. “But,” he added, “the true reason for all on a sudden swallowing so huge a slice of humble-pie aint far to seek—'tis the French alliance has brought Lord North to these peaceable dispositions!”

"My sister has it in a letter from Bath, that came with the General's own posts, that some of the Country Party spoke out pretty plain in Parliament about it," says Digby. "And all the refugees I've spoke with are furious to hear that every one is to be pardoned, and next to no confiscations to be made. It seems to me we'd better never have gone so far with 'em at first, than not go on now to a proper conclusion. His Majesty, it seems to me, is neither more nor less than bidding us put our tails between our legs, and go lick the hands of Congress!"

"Tis good-bye to our chances of distinction, I fear," returns André. "When we go home, all the women will laugh at us—beat by a parcel of hedgers and ditchers at Saratoga, and now out-generalled by a squad of attorneys and farmers in Congress! Our honour is concerned in bringing 'em to their knees. God knows I'm not bloodthirsty, but if we don't put down this rebellion we are eternally disgraced! This acknowledging of everybody, and treating rebels just as if they was ordinary belligerents, is sheer folly! And not content with acknowledging the rebel Congress, and the rebel Generals, the rebel currency, forsooth, is to be acknowledged too! 'Tis a premium on rebellion, and a flat insult to honest loyal subjects!"

"We took reams upon reams of their pasteboard at Ticonderoga," says Digby. "Some of the old officers saved some of it, I believe, but most of us made away with what we had. I remember there was three Captains papered a room in the General's quarters at Saratoga with it. That was a devil of a shame, Jack! we was sold—fairly sold—and I wish to Heaven Sir Harry had blown out Lord George's cowardly brains for him, instead of letting himself be bought off with the Bath!"

"Give a poor dog a bone," said André. "Sir Harry, though, is a dog whose bite is worse than his bark, and I don't fancy even the Bath would have appeased him if he had not felt pretty sure that my Lord George Germaine would, if he persisted, find some other means of preserving the skin he values so highly—that pretended affair of his with Governor Johnstone was dished up somehow, I'm convinced. He didn't sheer off at Minden, depend on't, to stand up to be shot at in a duello."

"I wish to Heaven they'd shot him for his conduct at Minden!" cries Fred. "He has lost us America, with his shameful negligence and folly. His Majesty, they say, has refused to admit poor General Burgoyne to an audience. Why

don't he send Lord George, the real author of our calamity, to the Tower? Never shall I forget the poor General's look, when I took my leave of him at Saratoga! If ever a man was ill used in this world, 'tis Sir John Burgoyne!"

"Ah, Digby, how I envy you that mission!" says André, his eyes kindling with generous admiration. "To pass undetected through the very strongholds of the rebels, and to persuade 'em you was their friend,—what is courage in action, to the coolness necessary for such an adventure as that! I am an unlucky dog! I thought to have wrote my name in the annals of these campaigns—though, upon my honour, now I see to what an ignominious conclusion Lord North means to bring us, I'm almost glad to be unknown to fame."

"We shall have the French to fight now, if the war does go on, Jack—there'll be some satisfaction there," observed Captain Digby, surveying his finger-nails, as though he intended to attack his natural enemies with those unsophisticated weapons.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MISCHIANZA.

There's a Masque :
Have you heard what's the invention ?

THE DUKE OF MILAN.

JACK ANDRÉ's lament at having had no opportunity of immortalising himself was premature. He had indeed already gained universal admiration by his good-natured exertions throughout the winter. He had painted a curtain for the theatre, acted in most of the plays, and been, with his friend Captain Montresor, the life and soul of all the performances. But he was now to exhibit his talents on a wider scale, in arranging the Entertainment to be given to Sir William Howe on his departure for England.

For, to the very great regret of the army, Sir William had requested to be recalled. He had endeared himself to the army in an extraordinary degree, and there was a universal outburst of grief when it was known that he was to be superseded. The time was short; Sir Henry Clinton had already arrived to take the command, and those who were best informed believed that he had received orders from home to evacuate Philadelphia.

The snows had long since melted, and the slushy half-paved streets were now white and clean. Such trees as had not been cut down for fuel now made a welcome shade, and the Treaty Tree at Kensington was green. A pair of hanging-birds had built their nest, far out on the end of a bough of the great tree which stood on the right of Mr. Shippen's door; and in the shady garden behind the house the fire-birds darted in and out of the bushes like flames, and humming-birds—more like great winged sapphires and emeralds than living creatures—flashed about the clove-pinks and roses. Althea, going round one afternoon to see Peggy, met her crossing the lawn with her tame fawn following her, and thought she had never seen so sweet a picture.

"Oh, you lovely pair of creatures!" cried she. "Why cannot you both go to the *Mischianza* just as you are? You are like the lady in the book I told you of, that rode upon a lion through the wild forest."

Peggy laughed and kissed her friend (while the fawn nibbled at her gown), and said this was the prettiest thing she ever had said to her.

The blackbirds in the tall yellow pines were singing like a chime of innumerable silver bells. The air seemed full of gladness—Althea's heart leapt up in spite of itself. Peggy began at once to talk about the *Mischianza*—which was the name to be given to the General's farewell Entertainment. A part of it was to be somewhat in the style of an ancient tournament, and Captain André had made drawings for the costumes of the knights and ladies, and of the trappings of the horses—and indeed for every detail. Peggy showed her friend a little sketch he had made of herself, in the semi-Turkish habit which the ladies were to wear.

"And I suppose," says Althea, holding the sketch in the shade of Peggy's quitoal—it was a very gay one, made of oiled India muslin, with an Oriental pattern of blue and orange—"I suppose, Peggy, that Captain André is to break his lance in honour of the original? who, by the bye, is twenty times more charming in her chintz gown, than in this heathenish silk and gauze."

"Indeed, no," replies Peggy simply. "I think 'tis you, Althea, whose knight he hopes to be."

"I think, my Peggy," returns Althea, giving her back the sketch, "that Jack André is a young gentleman of exquisite taste; and as Miss Peggy Shippen is the fairest and youngest of the ladies that have been spoken of for the *Mischianza*——"

"Dear Althea, you flatter me too much," says Peggy; "but 'tis your affection makes you overrate me. As for good looks"—here Peggy blushed most sweetly—"you would become the dress far better than I should; I aint stately enough to carry it off. You are right in saying it don't become me, and I like myself a deal better in this old gown. But, oh, Althea, we shall be as dull as ditchwater when you're all gone—I dread to think of it! And I should think you'd be sorry too; Captain André says New York aint half as agreeable. Aint you sorry to go?"

"No, dear Peggy," said Althea; Peggy fancied she sighed. "Don't think me unkind—I think the air don't suit me perhaps. Ever since I came, I've felt an oppression—a weight I can't throw off—"

"Why, Althea, every one says as our air is the finest possible! And the town's so cheerful—such wide streets; and the country round—real beautiful!"

"I know it," returned Althea. "Everybody says so—and I see it myself. And yet to me, 'tis the most melancholy place I ever was in; the very air seems full of heaviness."

Althea hastily dashed some tears out of her eyes as she continued,—“How foolish I must seem to you, dear Peggy! I think I'm not well. I've nothing in the world to cry about, and yet since we've been here, I'm for ever wanting to burst out a-crying.”

"Dearest Althea, I believe I can guess the cause——" began Peggy; but at that moment, she saw one of her sisters coming towards them, and Althea, pressing her arm, said hurriedly,—

"There's no cause, Peggy, none—only an odd fancy I've gotten hold of, that the air is heavy, like air in a graveyard—I've felt so sometimes in Bath. I shall throw it off, when we go away."

* * * * *

Peggy was so far correct, that the next day Captain André appeared in Market Street with a great portfolio under his arm, which proved to be full of all sorts of drawings for costumes, trappings, triumphal arches, and other details.

"I've been at it night and day," he said, as he spread these before Mrs. Maverick and Miss Digby; "and we have been obliged in great measure to select designs which can be quickly carried out, the time being so short."

The Captain took advantage of Mrs. Maverick going to the window, to examine one of the drawings more minutely, to say in a kind of aside,—

"Miss Digby, I trust you will not refuse me the honour of accepting me as your Knight—I had made my request before, but 'twas only last night we finally resolved on the form the entertainment should take."

Althea did not reply for several minutes. She changed colour a little, and was visibly embarrassed.

"Then henceforth I am your sworn servant, more honoured by your condescension than I can express," says André, bowing low, and unable to conceal his delight. But Althea stopped him.

"Stay, stay," she said ; "you are too quick, Captain André ! I am much honoured by your compliment, but—but—I think I prefer to be a private spectator."

André's countenance fell at this.

"Am I to think, Miss Digby," he asked reproachfully, "that 'tis so distasteful to you to be represented by me, that to escape it, you prefer to take no part at all in the *Mischianza* ?"

"No, no ; I assure you, no," she said earnestly. "If I appeared at all, there is no one I should prefer——"

"Can you truly say that ?" he asked, looking at her. Althea changed colour, but she replied calmly,—

"Most truly I can say there is no one"—Althea made an almost imperceptible pause—"in the world, that I would have chosen for my Knight in preference to you, if I was to take a part at all."

"I wish I dare believe you," he said, after watching her for a moment—and noticing that the hand with which she held his sketch of the triumphal arch trembled a little.

"You are monstrous polite, Captain André," she said, her colour rising. "It can scarce be pique at my refusal, since I fancy you had another lady in your eye before you thought of me. That was an admirable sketch you made of Peggy ; but you have not done her justice—she is even lovelier than you have made her."

"By heavens !" cried André, so loud, that Mrs. Maverick—who was still examining the drawings in the retirement of the bay-window—turned round, thinking she heard herself called. "You cannot think—you surely do not—I swear I never thought of any lady but yourself ! As soon as ever the idea of a tournament was proposed, 'twas you I thought of——"

"You honour me vastly—nay, do not be angry," Althea had begun in a sarcastic tone, which had brought the blood to André's face. "I assure you I'm not jealous of Peggy—I love her too dearly. I have another reason—a foolish one, perhaps, but—in short, I should be uneasy at my dignity as a Lady of the Mischianza, but shall heartily enjoy the humbler part of spectator."

"That's said to put me off—'tis patent! Who will believe that Miss Digby shrinks like a milkmaid from appearing amongst the quality!" cries André.

"I hope," observes Althea, straightening her neck, "that one may prefer a less striking position, without ceasing to be a gentlewoman."

"You mean you're obdurate! I vow adamant's not harder than you can be!" he burst out—but at this opportune moment, Mrs. Maverick brought back the plans for the pavilions, and the sketches of the water-procession, which she declared she had thoroughly mastered, and admired prodigiously.

Captain Digby (who had declined the office of Herald, as involving too much speechifying) was greatly disappointed at his sister's refusal. He was a modest enough fellow himself, but was very proud of Althea, and liked to see her admired; but she was not to be persuaded.

Jack André, with whom he talked the matter over, told him about the sketch of Peggy, and added that he feared Miss Digby might possibly have felt a little jealousy—"I ought rather to say, I hope it," he added. "What I do truly fear is, that she hath refused, lest that confounded Virginian, that your aunt is for ever harping on, should hear of it."

"On that matter, my dear fellow, I know as little as yourself," returned Fred. "'Twas plain he admired her, and he's the kind of fellow all the women admire. I've a sincere regard for him myself. Then he saved my scalp, as I've often told you—in return for which I doubt I gave him a broken pate at Stillwater. But his being a rebel's enough to damn him, I fancy, in her eyes. Ally always was as proud as Lucifer, and I think, even if she had been inclined to him, her pride would have overcome her inclinations——"

"Then she's jealous of Peggy Shippen, and there's hope for me!" cries Jack, wringing his hand. "My dear fellow, you've removed a mountain-load of anxiety off my mind!"

With this idea in his head, Captain André laid his lance

and shield at the feet—not of Peggy Shippen, but of Miss Chew, with whom he was on terms of easy *badinage*, without there being the least idea on either side of anything serious. Miss Chew laughingly accepted him; and Althea, when she heard of it, did not know whether to be vexed or pleased. As for Peggy Shippen, Lieutenant Winyard had taken an early opportunity of becoming her Knight.

Monday, the 18th of May, was the grand day, as was engraved on the tickets of admission.

The managers were not a little proud of the design for these tickets. Within a wreath-crowned shield, was a setting sun, with a view of the sea—soon to be ploughed by the General's homeward-bound keel. On a ribbon above the wreath were the words—

LUCEO DISCENDENS, AUCTO SPLENDORE RESURGAM.

And at the top, above the Prince of Wales's feathers,

VIVE, VALE!

Cannon and military trophies appropriately filled the spaces below.

The proceedings began with a regatta. First, came three flat-boats, with the music; then the three galleys, the *Ferret*, the *Hussar*, and the *Cornwallis*, all decked out in streamers, each bearing its own flag, and having on board the Generals, general-officers, and bexies of ladies. Each galley was attended by ten flat-boats—five on each quarter—lined with green cloth, and laden with guests. Along the river, both ships and wharves were gay with flags, and every foot of standing-room ashore and afloat was crowded with spectators.

It was half-past four in the afternoon, as this many-coloured procession moved off from Knight's Wharf, and rowed slowly down stream, while the bands struck up their loyalest tunes, and the *Vigilant* manned ship as the Admiral passed by. Just off the Market Wharf, they all lay on their oars, while the bands played GOD SAVE THE KING—the last time those strains should float above the waters of the Delaware.

But there were so many British voices there to cry “huzza”! that even if the Philadelphians were silent, no one noticed it—or—when the flood-tide came up so strong that the company were obliged to go ashore in barges—thought of the other tide setting stronger every hour.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FLASH OF LIGHT.

THE Mischianza was to be given at Mr. Wharton's country-seat, in Southwark. The house stood in its own grounds, amidst the venerable trees of a walnut-grove, old enough and to spare to have sheltered King Tamany. Here the company disembarked (to a salute from the *Vigilant* and the *Roebuck*), and walked in procession to the lists, which had been prepared upon the lawn. The two triumphal arches, whose designs Mrs. Maverick had so much admired, made a vista which was closed by the mansion itself.

Between four files of grenadiers, and two lines of light-horse, the company crossed the lists, the bands playing all the while. At the wings of the first arch, two pavilions had been erected, and here the ladies took their seats—the fourteen Ladies of the Mischianza sitting seven on a side in the front row of each pavilion. A vast throng of soldiers, sailors, and citizens of all degrees, not included in the special invitations, poured in behind the company, and spread itself round the lists, which were lined with troops. The thousands of scarlet coats, the accoutrements gleaming in the afternoon sun, the gay streamers, and the lively strains of the music, all made up a brilliant scene, which the dark verdure of the ancient walnut-grove threw into yet more brilliant relief. The managers, known by their favours of blue and white, were hurrying about the lists, and all was expectation.

Althea sat with Mrs. Maverick in the second row—and just behind Peggy Chew. Althea was looking very handsome, in a superb silver and black brocade, over a gray satin petticoat. The only colour about her was the red on her cheeks and lips, and the coral on her neck and arms. A kerchief of India muslin, worked by her own hands, was loosely knotted across her bosom, and the lace ruffles at her elbows were of a depth and exquisite fineness which made them the envy of all female beholders. Her beautiful arms and hands were concealed as little as possible by a pair of cobweb mittens, and she wore her hair unpowdered, under a broad tuscan hat.

"When unadorned, adorned the most," whispers Peggy Chew, twisting herself round to look at Althea. "If I had

such a piece of brocade and such ruffles as those, I should think twice before I would disguise myself in this fly-away rubbish ! I daresay, though, we produce a fine barbaric effect at a distance—and Peggy Shippen looks sweetly in her turban."

Peggy Shippen, being in the other pavilion, could not be very well seen, but she leaned forward at this instant, and kissed her hand to her friends in the rival camp.

And now a flourish of trumpets was heard, and, preceded by four trumpeters, a Herald galloped into the lists. Close behind, followed a band of Knights—each with his esquire bearing his lance and shield—led by Lord Cathcart, mounted on a prancing charger, his stirrups held by negro pages, and his lance and shield borne by his two esquires.

The Knights (among whom Captain André was conspicuous by his gallant bearing) were arrayed in ancient habits of white and red silk, and rode gray horses richly caparisoned in the same colours. Their Herald's surcoat bore the device of two roses intertwined, with the motto—"WE DROOP WHEN SEPARATED."

As this gay cavalcade rode round the lists, a tumult of applause broke out, calculated to test the discipline of the horses. These chivalrous beasts tossed their heads and stepped higher as the cheers rang louder, and seemed entirely to enter into the spirit of the occasion—Captain André's charger caracolled in a style worthy of the *Romaunt of the Rose*.

As the Knights passed the pavilions, they saluted the ladies, who were now able to make out the device and motto which each Knight bore upon his shield. Lord Cathcart—who appeared in honour of Miss Auchmuty—had taken for his device, Cupid riding on a lion, and with the legend—"SURMOUNTED BY LOVE." Captain André—whose grace in saluting was particularly admired—had for his device, two gamecocks fighting, and for his motto—"NO RIVAL." He had made a mighty mystery to Althea of this motto, but had darkly hinted that, when she saw it, she would perhaps see more in it than met the common eye. When, therefore, the Knights of the Blended Rose halted to pay their devoirs to their chosen ladies, and Captain André—as if by an accidental movement—extended his right arm towards the shield in his esquire's hand, Althea felt her cheeks tingle.

The Knights took up their stand near their ladies' pavilion, while their Herald made proclamation to sound of trumpet, to

the effect, that the Knights of the Blended Rose asserted the Ladies of the Blended Rose to excel those of the whole world in wit, beauty, and every accomplishment, and were ready to maintain the same against all comers.

Scarcely had the Herald proclaimed this defiance for the third time, when he was answered by a blast at the farther end of the lists, and a second Herald, attended like the first with four trumpeters—but dressed in black and orange, and bearing on his surcoat a burning mountain, with the motto, “I BURN FOR EVER”—came spurring in, and after a brief parley with his brother Herald, accepted the defiance on behalf of the Knights of the Burning Mountain—who asserted that *their* ladies were excelled by none in the universe.

The seven Knights of the Burning Mountain—who were all in black and orange, and rode black horses—hereupon paid their devoirs to the ladies, and drew up in front of the White Knights, whose Chief now cast down his gauntlet, which the Chief of the Black Knights (Captain Watson of the Guards) ordered his esquire to take up. All the Knights then received their lances and shields from their esquires, and with a graceful movement wheeled to a sufficient distance. Then, fixing lance in rest, and the Heralds crying “*Laissez aller !*” the two lines galloped to the encounter, and, meeting in mid career, shivered their lances, to the huge delight of the spectators.

It is unfortunate, that the only detailed accounts of this famous Passage of Arms which have come down to us, are those written by Captain André himself—who, with the modesty which distinguished him, has merged his own particular deeds in the general glory. He tells us, indeed, that after that encounter with lances, the combatants discharged their pistols—thus incidentally revealing to us that the period represented must have been the late decline of the Age of Chivalry. What kind of pistols they were, which the Knights of the Blended Rose and of the Burning Mountain respectively discharged at each other—whether the solid but cumbersome demihague, the light and handy dragon, or the gimcrack firelock (on the pattern of that one wherewith Cornet Joyce pointed his immortal peroration)—he does not inform us. We may be sure, however, that, whatever the pattern of their weapons, they popped them off in knightly fashion, and that Jack André fought close behind his leader.

One could wish that he had given us more particular details

of the fourth encounter—in which the Knights fought with that unequivocally chivalric weapon, the sword. It must have been a pretty sight, to see those fourteen toledos leap from their scabbards, and twinkle in the sun. Captain André's swordsmanship, in particular, we are sure must have been worth seeing. It would not be difficult to imagine him—spurring his horse to the rescue of his Chief, hard bested by Watson and the Knights of the Mountain—or swiftly recovering himself, and carrying the war to the other end of the field. But he has told us nothing of all this, and we must be content with imagining. The esquires too, no doubt, bore them bravely—Captain André's young brother Louis (who was a lieutenant in the 26th Foot) not the least.

Captain André does, however, mention a furious encounter between the two Chiefs, who, towards the close of the tourney, singled each other out, and slashed away in good fourteenth-century style, until the Marshal of the Field, rushing in between them, declared that enough had been done for honour, and that their mistresses commanded them, as the price of their future favours, to instantly put up their swords.

After this, there was a grand procession, under the triumphal arches, to the garden in front of the house. The first arch, being erected in honour of Lord Howe, was adorned with naval trophies, and had a sailor with a drawn cutlass standing in each of its niches.

As the ladies left their seats, Peggy Shippen darted across to Althea.

"Oh, wasn't it lovely?" cries Peggy, squeezing Althea's arm in her delight. "Was ever anything so *grand*! Oh, I do dote upon seeing fighting, when I know there's nobody going to be hurt!"

The Knights meantime were drawn up beyond the Admiral's arch; and as soon as the ladies moved on, their cavaliers dismounted and joined them, and so they all proceeded towards the house. A flight of carpeted steps led up to the door, and into a spacious hall, whose panels had been painted to imitate Siena marble. Here, and in the adjoining apartments, the company found tea, lemonade, and other cooling drinks; and while they were refreshing themselves with these, the Knights came in, and, on bended knee, received the favours prepared for them, and which till now had adorned their ladies' turbans. As Captain André received his from Peggy Chew, an aide of Sir

Henry Clinton's came up, and, as soon as André had risen from his knee, touched him on the arm, and whispered something in his ear.

"Take him to my lodgings," says André—"his business must wait till to-morrow. 'Tis only a messenger come from the rebels, about the Convention troops, and I will not lose the opening of the ball for any rebel unhung!"

These last words were said to Peggy Chew—who laughed and said she had heard of a death's-head at a feast, but had never known of one before.

The dusk of twilight had set in before the dancing began. The ballroom was upstairs, and was painted in pale blue, panelled with a small gold beading, and in the panels were festoons of flowers in their natural colours, and a pink "sur-base," with blue drapery. Nearly every pier-glass in Philadelphia had been borrowed for the adornment of this room and the supper-room. The ballroom was a blaze of mirrors and wax-lights, all decorated with ribbons and artificial flowers.

Amidst all this splendour, Althea felt as though she were walking in a dream. Even the gay assemblies which she had seen in Bath had never equalled this, but she felt a weariness such as she had never known there—though, during her brief season at Bath, she had believed she had enough to damp her spirits. She seemed to herself to be dull and faded, with all the life gone out of her. But when Captain Montresor came to claim her hand for the quadrille, she took her place with a grace as stately, and answered him with wit as sparkling, as though her heart had been as light as her feet.

Captain Montresor, who was chief engineer, had planned the fireworks; and a little before ten o'clock he disappeared from the ballroom (from which Captain André had also been absent for some time). As soon as it was announced that the fireworks were about to begin, a great part of the company flocked downstairs, some to the garden, and others to the windows of the great hall—many of the ladies, however, among whom was Althea, remaining at the windows of the ballroom.

The fireworks were shown from the nearest of the arches, and began with a magnificent bouquet of rockets, which rushed heavenwards in all directions and fell in showers of golden rain. Roman candles, Catherine wheels, serpents, shot up, whizzed, and sputtered, amidst the applause of the crowd. Set-pieces

followed, to the number of twenty, all which went off without any hitch or mishap.

But Captain Montresor had reserved his grandest display to the last. The great triumphal arch suddenly translated itself into light—rockets flew hissing upwards, and burst in fiery spray, and fire-balloons slowly ascended. The bomb-shell and the flaming heart, which adorned the pillars of Jack André's masterpiece, spouted Chinese fountains, and above the architrave on the top appeared Fame, dressed all in stars, with her trumpet set to her lips, and a label coming out of it, bearing the device —“*TES LAURIERS SONT IMMORTELS.*” Coloured fires sprang from every crevice on the arch, and amidst all this blaze, one last torrent of rockets burst from the pediment, out-blazing even Fame, who was seen for one moment—a light through light—and then was lost in the fiercer glare of more common fires (as ambition is sometimes swept away by the more common forces which itself has called into action), and then all was darkness.

In that last most dazzling moment, Althea happened to glance from the spectacle to the spectators, and saw Jasper Fleming, standing in the garden below, among a little knot of gentlemen. She could distinctly see every line of his face and figure, even to the hilt of his sword, which gleamed from the folds of the cloak thrown carelessly over his left shoulder. Every detail of his person and uniform impressed itself on her memory—the dark-blue coat, with skirts fastened back, showing the scarlet lining, the white stock, the ruffles at his breast and wrist, the white waistcoat and breeches, the long riding-boots, and the red-plumed cocked hat, and gilt epaulette.

She thought he perceived her—his eyes seemed to be looking straight into hers. He was, or the coloured light perhaps made him appear, deathly pale, and his face was sterner than she had ever seen it.

All this, which takes so long to tell, passed in an instant—in the last discharge of fireworks. Then darkness swallowed up the triumphal arch, Fame and her motto, the delighted crowd, and Jasper's frowning face—and sound took the place of light, as a great cheer broke forth from the multitude, and was echoed in less well-bred tones from far beyond the garden-enclosure. But Althea did not hear it—she had fainted away as she stood, squeezed up against the window-shutter.

* * * * *

She came to herself in a few minutes. By that time, the

crowd had already begun to break up, and the servants were relighting the wax candles, most of which had been put out while the fireworks were displayed. Althea found herself being forcibly deposited in a chair by Mrs. Maverick, who had instantly observed her indisposition.

"You will feel better now, my dear," said that energetic old lady, thrusting her bottle of smelling-salts under Althea's nose. "'Tis the monstrous heat—I felt just ready to go off myself, before they opened the other windows. I protest, I thought I must be stifled!"

"Did you see it, cousin?" gasped Althea, clutching Mrs. Maverick's wrist, and looking wildly at her. "It stood just there—on the garden-path——"

She was still all confused and bewildered, and was trembling from head to foot.

"See it? The figure of Fame? of course I did, child! Do you think I'm blind? But 'twas up on top of the arch——"

"I feel so stupid, dear cousin, I don't quite know what I'm saying," said Althea—a faint tinge of colour creeping over her white cheeks. She stretched herself, and rubbed her eyes as though she had but just awakened from a dream. "I'll sit here a little, till I recover myself."

"You must try to get better soon, my dear, for supper will be ready directly," observed Mrs. Maverick, who really seemed to have borne the heat and excitement better than Althea—but then she did not think she had just seen the ghost of a man she was always trying vainly to forget, reproaching her with its hollow eyes.

Of course, the idea soon occurred to Althea, as a sensible young woman, that Jasper Fleming might possibly not be dead after all, but might be actually here in the flesh, alive and well. But there was quite as much agitation in this alternative as in the other—so much, indeed, that her knees gave way anew under her, and she could only feebly beg to be allowed to sit still a little longer. It seemed to her that if the suspense continued many minutes, she must die; she was far too shaken and confused for hope—she only felt that she must know the worst, or die, without further delay. She had almost brought herself to tell her cousin what she had seen—Mrs. Maverick had been bathing her forehead with some essence of lavender, which she always carried about with her, and had just left her

an instant to fetch another chair—when she heard steps passing below, and Captain André's voice saying,—

“So Colonel Fleming has come in about it. You may have seen him—he was here just now—a tall man, in a dark-blue uniform. He——”

Althea lost the rest, as the speaker had by this time got out of earshot; but this was enough. Jasper was alive—was there—and she might see him at any moment! She found this thought more reviving than the lavender water, and almost as inspiring as the smelling-salts—I say, almost—for Mrs. Maverick's smelling-salts were of a most uncommon vigour.

The truth must be told—no sooner was Althea satisfied that what she had just seen was no phantom risen out of its bloody grave to upbraid her, but only a rebel officer come to flaunt his rebel uniform under the British General's eyes—and doubtless full of secret triumph at the expected arrival of the French—than she felt justly indignant at having wasted so much emotion. No one but herself knew how many tears she had shed in the silence of the night, over Jasper Fleming's untimely fate. Grief for him had completely spoiled her enjoyment of a most delightful winter—and nearly spoiled her eyes too, as Cousin Maverick had noticed. She had detested Philadelphia for no other reason, than because it was so near Germantown—where she had all this while imagined Jasper Fleming might lie buried, with perhaps not even a stone to mark his grave! It was solely from this consideration, that she had declined to take part in the *Mischianza*, and had even allowed Captain André to believe that her refusal had been inspired by jealousy of Peggy Shippen!

Althea was not angry with Jasper for being alive—on the contrary, she was exceedingly glad—how glad, there would now be plenty of time to think about. But she felt positively enraged with him for having been reported dead, and with herself for having suffered so much on account of a false report. Most maddening thought of all, he had perhaps seen the ridiculous spectacle she had just made of herself! She determined to meet him with so much coolness that, if he had observed anything, he should be quickly disabused of the idea that *he* had been the cause of her indisposition!

This resolve greatly contributed to her recovery; she presently declared herself quite restored, and before supper was announced, and the ladies' cavaliers came to take them in, had

arranged a neat little sentence with which to greet Colonel Fleming—a sentence which should put their after-conversation upon a proper footing, and leave no place for any sentimental weakness, and which should moreover show the Colonel that other people could perhaps be as unconcerned as he.

CHAPTER IX.

ALTHEA TEARS HER RUFFLE.

THE Mischianza supper was not the least brilliant part of the festival. Precisely at midnight, supper was announced, and some large folding-doors—concealed till now by an artful device of Captain André's—were suddenly thrown open, discovering a magnificent saloon more than two hundred feet long, painted in the Italian style, to resemble an harbour, with festoons of vine-leaves. A vast number of pier-glasses, lustres, and wax-tapers—all trimmed with ribbons and artificial flowers, like those in the ballroom—lighted up every part of the hall.

As the General and the Admiral entered the supper-room (to which an inclined platform led down by an easy descent), four-and-twenty black slaves, in Oriental dresses, and with silver collars and bracelets, appeared in two lines, bowing to the very ground.

The supper was laid with four hundred and thirty covers. Althea, who was led in by Lieutenant Wickham of the Rangers, found herself seated between that waggish young gentleman and Parson Badger of the Artillery—who made them very merry by repeating the comments of his host, John Fields, on the festival.

"Friend Fields is a very plain friend," says the Parson; "as plain as a pike-staff, or as a coat without buttons, or as the nose on his own visage, which is likewise of the plainest. 'So, Friend Badger,' says he to me t'other day, 'they tell me thee is to have a grand junketing over to Walnut-Grove, before long.' 'Yes,' says I; 'and if you'll come, I engage to get you a ticket.' 'Nay, friend,' says he, 'I've read in the Prophet Dan'el of Belshazzar's feast, and that's as much as I want to know about such things.'"

"A death's-head at a banquet would be nothing to a Quaker at the Mischianza," says Wickham. "'Twas a rash

offer, Parson. What if the Spirit had moved honest John to take you at your word, and come to prophesy against us!"

So merry was the party at this table, that Captain André—who, with the other Knights of the Blended Rose and their ladies, sat at the next—called out to the Parson that he had just become aware of a sad oversight.

"What's that, Captain?" asks his reverence, tossing off a glass. "For my part, I've nothing to complain of."

"We should have appointed a chaplain to the Knights," says André; "I protest, the ladies at your table have done nothing but laugh at your wit, ever since we sat down to supper."

"Captain André is jealous of his Reverence," cries Peggy Chew, who has been rallying Surgeon Beaumont on the incongruity of the chief actor of comedy undertaking the serious office of a herald.

"You remind me, Miss Peggy, that I've one last *oyez* to make to-night," returns the surgeon, "and I'll be off to prepare for it, before you upset my natural gravity."

So saying, he slips out, and a few minutes afterwards, there is a flourish heard without, and enter the Herald of the Blended Rose with his trumpets, and proclaims the King's health, which is drunk to another flourish of trumpets, all the company standing. The Herald next proclaimed the health of the Queen, of the Royal Family, of the Army and Navy, and their Commanders, and lastly, of the Knights and their Ladies, and the Ladies in general—all which toasts were drunk with due honours, and a blast on the trumpets.

Althea had promised the first minuet after supper to Captain André. During its progress, she cast many furtive glances round the ballroom, but without discovering the person she sought. Captain André rallied her on being so *distracte*. "Confess, Miss Digby," he whispered, "that, when you saw the charming Miss Peggy Shippen, you felt an amiable regret at having unkindly refused to wear so becoming an attire."

"Confess, Captain André," she retorted, "that sweet Peggy Shippen became it better than I should have done."

"If Miss Peggy Shippen is an angel," says the Captain, bowing gallantly, with his hand on his heart, "that does not prevent Miss Althea Digby from being a queen."

"Whenever you pay me compliments, Captain André, I remember the proverb, 'practice makes perfect,'" says Althea, with a sly malice in her tone, and a mischievous smile in her eye.

"I protest, Miss Digby——"

"That I am the last comer?" cried Althea, laughing.

"It only rests with you to be so," said André in a low tone.

"Nay, we allow nothing but jesting to-night," returned Althea, making him a low curtsey as the quadrille ended. "'Tis, I believe, your own rule. Take me, if you please, down to the hall—'tis so hot here."

"Are you for ever obdurate?" asked André, as they went downstairs.

"I protest, Captain André, I will hear no more from so fickle a Knight. You have been doing battle this very day for another lady, and you offer me the fag end of your wit! I protest, 'tis too much. I'll listen to no more compliments from you—until to-morrow morning."

André was puzzled by her manner. Her words were by no means discouraging, but her manner seemed to his quick apprehension to convey a covert defiance.

"Be it as you command," he said lightly. "May I at least have the honour of fetching you a syllabub?"

"No; I wish nothing," she replied; "'tis scarce five minutes since supper. I believe I see a gentleman that I know, and should like to speak with a moment," she added in the same indifferent tone.

Following the direction of her eyes, André saw Colonel Fleming at the door which led to the garden. He was standing so nearly in the same position in which Althea had seen him by the blaze of the fireworks, that the remembrance of that moment shot a disconcerting thrill through her. Under the more moderate beams of the candles, however, there was nothing ghostly about him, although the ill-timed merriment he had witnessed—and possibly the effort necessary on his part to meet Althea with apparent calmness—may have imparted unusual sternness to his countenance.

"I've always understood that you had a correspondence with the rebels," whispered André in Althea's ear; and added aloud,—"*I leave you, then, under the escort of Colonel Fleming, whose acquaintance I had the honour of making this evening.*"

The gentlemen bowed ceremoniously to each other, and André turned on his heel. Thanks to Mrs. Maverick's mysterious allusions, he was perfectly well aware that the Colonel had a brother who had served under Arnold in Canada, and was desperately in love with Miss Digby, and of many other

interesting particulars—all of which had led him to conceive a hearty dislike for the young gentleman in question, and not to look with much favour on his relation.

“I did not expect to see you here to-night, Colonel Fleming—we heard on excellent authority that you was killed at Germantown.”

This was the speech which Althea had concocted, while she sat getting over her fainting-fit, and which she had thought would be a good beginning to a conversation in which she was resolved to betray no foolish weakness. Being half afraid to say it, she delivered it with an air of defiance, which did not improve the sound of it, and she perceived with infinite satisfaction that it had hit its mark.

Jasper started, muttered a smothered exclamation, and made an angry movement with the hand which held his hat, while a red flush mounted to his brow, and, instantly retreating, left him very pale. Not one of these signs of emotion was lost on Miss Digby—who, however, was herself in a sad internal flutter, and felt her knees tremble under her—nor was the great and successful effort with which he almost instantly suppressed them, as he replied with grave irony,—

“As you see, Miss Digby, I still live—perhaps I shall make a better use of my next opportunity.”

Human nature will assert itself sometimes, in the most stoical of us. Jasper Fleming had long since resolved that duty and honour forbade him so much as attempting to step between his brother and Althea Digby; and he had of set purpose fostered the natural antagonism, which he thought he perceived she felt towards him, in the hope that he would thus make his own part easier to play. But he had not expected such a reception as this; and he noted the indifference with which she could suddenly see him alive from the dead, with a pang so sharp, that he could easily have imagined he had just received a stab somewhere very near his heart. Such pangs are indeed sharper than bodily ones, and rankle much longer. Jasper had known what it was in the heat of battle to scarcely feel a wound; but no excitement of conflict could have made him insensible to this invisible thrust, dealt him by a woman's hand. For a moment it bewildered his senses, as though it had been an actual blow.

“I see I intrude on your meditations, Colonel Fleming,” said Althea, piqued at his silence and annoyed at the self-possession he had shown on meeting her. “Perhaps—as you have,

I'm told, Mr. Washington's affairs on your mind—I distract you."

"I was only most unprofitably considering what an inveterate habit of hope we have, and how little experience avails against it," returned Jasper—so bitterly that Althea was sorry she had gone quite so far. While she was wondering whether he had seen her at the window, and resolving to ascertain this important fact, even if she had to put the question point-blank, he continued,—“May I beg the favour of a few minutes' private conversation with you, Miss Digby? I have a message to you from my brother Noel, which I can scarce deliver here——”

“There is no one in the garden just now,” said Althea, glad of an opportunity to escape some curious eyes, that were watching Miss Digby talking to the rebel officer.

“I saw you at the window, while the fireworks were displayed,” he said, as they turned to descend the steps. He paused an instant, but Althea said nothing. She seemed to be engaged with the skirt of her gown, but Jasper saw her confusion—she had blushed so vividly, that her very neck was dyed under her kerchief.

“I fancied you had perceived me,” he continued; “I even imagined that you appeared a little startled.”

The discovery that Althea was not looking upon him for the first time, when she uttered those hard-hearted words, most unreasonably consoled him. He ought to have guessed it, he said to himself—'twas an unwomanly speech, and Althea's heart was incapable of making it, except by an after-thought, when her pride had had time to assert itself.

As for Althea, she would willingly have made some disclaimer, but no words would come. She had overrated her strength. She was conscious of an almost irresistible inclination to burst out laughing—or crying—she was not sure which. Lest it should be to cry, she resolved to remain silent altogether. A few steps took them out of the glare of the many-coloured oil-lamps, into a darkness which left the forms of things vaguely discernible, but wrapped all those forms in a monotonous duskiness. The stars shone large and yellow in a sky which seemed lighted by the memory of moonlight—or perhaps some lingering beams of sunset still clung about its blackness, as mists hang long on the murky blueness of pine-forests; and the sweet night air came to them laden with the breath of flowers. Everything was full of summer-calm, and richness, and repose. Althea felt

her ears throb with the silence into which they seemed to have stepped. There was no sound but that of their footsteps on the gravel—and Althea's own heart, knocking so loud against her bodice, that she fancied Colonel Fleming must hear it.

Althea was recalling their last meeting—perhaps the least satisfactory reminiscence she could have chosen. On that occasion, Colonel Fleming had rescued Mrs. Maverick and herself from a very unpleasant predicament—and, having done so, had hurried off, to order out some whale-boats, or to superintend some other equally treasonable proceeding. It was almost two years since that night, and he had been in arms against his King ever since—and she had been beguiled into weeping for him. She seemed to be sitting once more in Mrs. Quackenboss's best parlour, watching Jasper as he stood there, apparently unconscious of her presence—occupied doubtless with his piratical whale-boats.

"It is a long while since we last met, Miss Digby," observed Jasper, suddenly breaking the silence. "I cannot hope that the events which have happened since then have led you to look with less disfavour on the cause I represent; but they have, I trust, taught you to think of it with less contempt."

"And I, Colonel Fleming, had trusted that all the bloodshed and misery we have seen since then, might perhaps have led you to regret the part you had in bringing it about."

Althea spoke now with no bitterness—there was even a trace of pleading in her tone, but her words stung him to the quick.

"I am more immutably fixed in it than ever!" he replied hotly. "Do you not know, Miss Digby, that we prize most highly that which has cost us most dear? And do you think that, having shed so much of our blood, and sacrificed so much that is dearer than life itself, in the maintenance of our rights, we will now tamely let them go? But we surely do not meet merely to renew our old quarrel," he added in an altered tone. "I have a message to you from my brother. I know not how you will receive it in this mood—yet this may be, and probably is, the only opportunity I shall have of delivering it. 'Twas to do so, I came here to-night."

"I can never receive any message from your brother otherwise than kindly," replied Althea. The tears came into her eyes, and into her voice, as she spoke—something within her was fairly bursting to express a little tenderness, and here there seemed to be a safe vent.

"I hope, then," said Jasper, as they sauntered into a narrower alley, "that his message will at least not offend you. Probably you do not know that he is now in the camp at Valley Forge, and has been there since February. General Arnold is still invalided, but as soon as he recovers sufficiently, Noel intends to serve under him again. That, however, is not what I have to say to you. You must have been long aware, Miss Digby, of the feelings with which you have inspired him——"

"Indeed, I never tried or wished to do it—and I hoped that by this time he had forgot me, as I've often begged of him to do."

Althea spoke quickly—her heart beat so fast, she could scarcely draw her breath.

"Do you think a man can forget when he is bidden?" said Jasper quietly. "Noel bids me say, that if you have remembered him but half as often as he has remembered you, he will be content."

"In the sense that he means it, I have not remembered him," said Althea, trying in vain to keep the flutter at her heart out of her voice. She was dreadfully agitated. "Give him my sincere sisterly affection," she continued, struggling to keep from tears; "and tell him I never think of my dear brother, without grateful thoughts of him who saved him."

"He will not be content with that," said Jasper. "He asks much more."

"I have no more to give him," said Althea, in a constrained voice.

She had refused Jasper's arm; they were walking side by side, but as far apart as the narrow path allowed.

"I hear something in your voice, Miss Digby," said Jasper, standing still, "which tells me that those cold words do not come from a cold heart. Are you sacrificing Noel's and your own happiness to the miserable rancours of the times? Let me use a brother's freedom with you for once——" He took her hand, and even amidst the gloom of the sombre trees above them, she knew that his eyes were fixed searchingly upon her. "Remember," he went on, "that as you once said to me, this unhappy war must one day come to an end—may come to an end very soon. Will you give him no hope in the future?"

"I can never marry him," she said—he felt her hand grow cold in his own as she spoke. "'Tis impossible that you can understand the pain with which I say it—but I never can—I

never will ! Think that I've vowed it—think anything—only believe I'm sincere, and speak of it no more !”

“Is that your last reply to him ?” asked Jasper, still detaining her hand, which she would have drawn away.

“Yes”—she said—with a sigh which seemed to come out of the very depths of some secret grief. Then she suddenly almost snatched her hand away, and turned back towards the broad walk in front of the house.

Jasper was puzzled. What was the meaning, he wondered, of the emotion which he saw plainly she was trying to conceal ? Had she some other attachment ? He had heard her name that night coupled with Captain André's. Or did she, as he still inclined to believe, love Noel ? and did only that fatal word *rebel* stand in the way ? Only ! Jasper knew too well that that word was a wide gulf, across which only a mighty love could leap. Well—Noel must plead his cause himself.

“She may be too proud to own to me what she will confess more easily to him,” he thought. “I can do no more—to plead for another with the woman one loves, is more than flesh and blood can endure.”

“Do you mean to continue with Mr. Washington's army until the war is over ?” asked Althea abruptly.

“I shall fight as long as there is anything left of me,” replied Jasper. He said it in a very hard tone—it seemed to Althea, that he wished to remind her in the most offensive manner possible of all that divided them. This had once been a favourite pastime with herself, but she resented it in him all the more for that.

“You can never hope for a second stroke of fortune like poor General Burgoyne's disaster,” she said. “I hoped that by this time, you, at least, would have seen the policy of accepting these generous concessions which His Majesty offers, and so putting an end to all this misery.”

“'Tis too late,” replied Jasper. “Nothing short of complete Independence is possible now.”

“'Tis impossible your undisciplined militia can stand before the King's troops, except by some mere chance,” she said sharply.

“Such chances have happened though, and will again,” he replied—Althea thought he was bent on provoking her. “We are getting used to war. Be assured, Miss Digby, we shall conquer or die. And for my part,” he added bitterly, “life

has not been so sweet to me of late, but that I have sometimes hoped some bullet, kinder than the rest, may put an end to all my earthly perplexities—and to that conflict with myself, so much harder to wage than the other. But 'tis unmanly to speak thus," he said, interrupting himself. "Now that we have come so far on towards our goal, there is surely enough for a man to live for, whatever his private griefs may be."

"Are you so unhappy?" said Althea—and her voice faltered.

"A very common case, Miss Digby. I had the misfortune—or the folly, call it whichever you will—to fix my affections where they can never meet with the least return."

"How do you know that?" she asked quickly—and then was angry with herself that she had asked it.

"The lady cordially detests me," said Jasper sarcastically. "I have long ago resigned myself to her hatred, for there is an insuperable obstacle in the way—I am in honour bound never to seek her love. But I confess to having been weak enough to wish to gain her esteem, and to have hoped for it, long after I ought to have seen I hoped in vain. I have, however, every reason to believe that her dislike is only exceeded by her contempt. Pray, let us talk on some more pleasant topic—we have contrived to find so many disagreeable ones in the last half-hour, that I'm sure you must regret I did not fall at Germantown."

"I am quite unaware, Colonel Fleming, of having given you any right to suppose me capable of so wicked a feeling," said Althea in an unsteady voice. He was, she felt, very cruel.

"Our silence says as much as our words," he replied. "You did not—I could not but observe it—so much as pay me the compliment of saying you was glad to see me recovered. I admire the candour which will not utter a sentiment it does not feel; yet, I confess, it hurt me. War itself admits of some exchange of civilities, and in looking forward to this meeting, I had pleased myself with the fancy that you would at any rate forbear to reproach me."

At the word "recovered," Althea's heart smote her—then he had been wounded! She would gladly have expressed her sympathy, but for the fear of showing more than she intended.

"If you will not give me credit for it unless I say it, I will say it," she said—struggling hard with a lump in her throat, which had for several minutes been causing her great inconvenience.

nience. "I am sincerely glad ; and I think the report of your death perhaps caused me quite as much regret as you would have cared that it should do." It was with the utmost difficulty that she restrained her tears, and she could not help her voice trembling. Had Jasper been one whit less exasperating—had he permitted himself to show but a little weakness—she felt that she must have betrayed herself. But he wholly misunderstood her.

"She is sorry for Noel's brother," he thought bitterly, perceiving how deeply moved she was. "She will not send him a kind word, but she cannot conceal the vital interest she takes in all belonging to him, and her detestation of me is but another proof of it."

He dared not trust his voice to speak. He had come there, resolved that no sign of his own feelings should escape him, but he felt that he was rapidly losing his self-control, and that he had already said too much. The sooner the interview was over, the better. Just then, they came out into the space in front of the house—they could hear the music, and see the lights and the passing figures. The sight irritated Jasper still more—he felt he could endure the torture no longer, and he involuntarily quickened his steps.

It has been remarked before, that trifling causes sometimes bring about very considerable results. Colonel Fleming and Miss Digby would most likely have gone on misunderstanding and exasperating each other, until events had parted them for ever, if Althea had not just then caught one of her ruffles in the clasp of the Colonel's cloak, as it hung dangling from his shoulder. The ruffle was of Mechlin lace, and had belonged to her mother—for both of which reasons she was anxious, even in this agitated moment, not to tear it. There was a seat at a corner of the garden walk, and a stream of light from one of the open windows of the house fell across one end of it, leaving all the rest in shadow. Althea stopped here, to see how best to disengage herself. But her eyes were full of tears, her hands were trembling, and the lace was awkwardly entangled. The Colonel stood stock-still, and never offered to assist. Althea impatiently pulled the cloak from his shoulder, the better to get at the clasp—but her tears blinded her, and she only made bad worse. "I cannot do it," she said pettishly, and feeling ready to cry. "Pray help me !"

As he obeyed her, she looked up, and saw what his cloak

had hitherto concealed—the sleeve of Jasper's left arm was empty from the elbow.

Althea uttered a stifled cry. "I did not know"—she gasped under her breath—and, sinking down on the seat, she covered her face with her hands (tearing the ruffle into ribbons as she did so), and burst into a passion of tears.

Jasper was greatly surprised and touched; but, as often happens, so soon as Althea lost her self-possession, he regained some of his own. But he tried in vain to calm her—at every word he uttered, she only sobbed the more wildly.

"My dear Miss Digby, the occasion does not warrant so many tears," he said, as he carefully freed her ruffle. "There—I do not think it is much torn."

He spoke lightly; but the sight of the proud Althea weeping so bitterly on his account was almost too much for his resolution. It was by a great effort that he spoke calmly.

"We must expect such accidents in war," he said; "and if you did not think I was on the wrong side, I would tell you that nothing in my life ever gave me more satisfaction than the conviction I had shed my blood in the cause of my country."

Althea had laid her head on the end of the seat. It was a hard unsympathising pillow, but she watered it with her tears.

Finding that argument failed, Jasper next tried turning the matter into a jest—but this was worse still, and only made Althea sob more bitterly than ever. A burst of dance-music came floating out on the night wind.

"'Twas an unpardonable piece of stupidity on my part, to let you be so shocked!" he cried at last in despair. "But by the way you spoke of Germantown, I imagined you knew——"

"Do you think if I had known, I'd have said what I did?" cried Althea impetuously, lifting up her tear-stained face, and turning to him—he had sat down beside her. "I was not shocked—do you think I've never seen wounds before? But I deserve it! Yet—oh, what a wretch I must seem to you, that you think it so strange I should shed a few tears at seeing you——"

She broke down again. Even now he did not understand; but as she sat on his left, he leaned towards her, and so passed his right arm round her, and drew her head to his breast—that he should hold her this once, could, he thought, be no treason to Noel—it seemed to him like an embrace before death.

She let her head rest there without resistance—he even

felt her cling to his arm. Her sobs came slower and quieter, till they almost died away in long-drawn sighs—but still she clung to him, and once she softly stroked his arm.

"Dearest Althea," he said gently, "do you think I do not see that if you show all this tenderness for me, it must be because you feel much more for Noel—however your pride may make you deny it?"

Althea did not speak.

"Is it not so, Althea?"

This time, she withdrew from his encircling arm (but not unkindly), and turned a little away from him.

"Is it not so?" he insisted, taking one of her hands and holding it fast. "And will you not give me some other message? For God's sake, Althea, don't trifle at such a moment as this! If Noel has a rival, you owe it him to let him know it. He bid me ask you—nothing short of that, he says, will make him resign his hopes of winning you at last. Let your heart speak, Althea——"

"You are cruel!" she sobbed, turning away her head, and trying to get her hand free.

"I must know—I will know! If it is Captain André——"

"No, no!" cried Althea, still struggling to free herself—but more feebly.

"If 'tis not he, 'tis some other. I would not press you indelicately, but I am come to a pass where I must know the truth—and, by Heaven, I will know it!" There was a rising passion in his voice—he would not be denied.

"You torture me!" she said. "Well then—since nothing else will do—tell Noel, though he is dear to me, there is another dearer still—whom I've tried to hate—who believes I hate him. Oh, I have been a proud wicked woman! I have hardened my heart against the noblest, truest heart in the world, and I knew it all the while—but God knows, I repent of it now!"

There was a moment's silence, and then Jasper said, in a low broken voice,—

"Althea—Althea—were those tears mere womanly compassion, or am I the happiest man alive?"

Where they sat, they could not see each other's faces clearly, but her eyes sought his, before she answered,—

"They were not compassion."

And then, with a movement of infinite tenderness, she bent that proud head, and kissed the hand which clasped her own.

CHAPTER X.

MAGNANIMITY OF CAPTAIN DIGBY.

That you were once unkind befriends me now.

THESE mortal foes, thus suddenly become lovers, had a great deal to say to each other, and but little time to say it in. At any moment, some of the revellers might come out and interrupt them—and in two or three days at most, the fierce tide of war must sweep them far apart once more.

If Jasper had wooed and won her in happier times, Althea would have tormented him with a thousand caprices, and shown herself coy to the end. She would have doled out her kindness as a queen does her favours, and frowned a dozen times for once that she had smiled. But now, knowing that this first embrace might perhaps be the last, the haughty Althea became on a sudden all passion and tenderness. She lavished kind words and loving caresses on him—she alternately wept and laughed, and reproached herself with her past unkindness.

"When I think of what I said to-night," she cried, "it is as though I had struck you—but I will make up for it! I will make you forget it!"

"I do not wish to forget it—now," he said, drawing her closer to his breast. "'Twill make the remembrance of this hour all the sweeter."

"And you could believe I preferred Noel to you!"

"Indeed," he said drily, "I might have known that you spoke too kindly of him."

"I have a most sincere affection for him," said Althea, with a laugh which ended in something like a sob. "He is a dear generous boy; and I'm not sure—if I had never known you—but oh, Jasper, I never hurt you, but I hurt myself far more!" This was not the case, but Althea sincerely believed it. "You will know it some day," she said—"when I have had time to show you how tender I can be to those I love."

"I always knew it," he said. "I knew that, proud as you are, your tenderness can be greater than your pride. Your very hatred—as I fancied it—showed me that. It had such a warmth in it——"

"That I wonder you never suspected 'twas but love gone

awry," she whispered, hiding her face on his breast. "But you said one thing I can't forgive you—you said I despised you. You knew—you must have known—that that, at least, was impossible!"

"Nay," he returned, "how should I know it? You had seen me weak in body, and peevish in mind—worn by sickness, and cast down in spirits——"

"And I chose that time to be unkind," she sighed. "I can never forgive myself, and though you are so generous, you make nothing of it, I cannot forget it. But, indeed, Jasper, I did not mean to slam that door!"

"I never thought you did—" he said, "though 'twas not then you hurt me most. But do not reproach yourself too much, my sweetest Althea—'tis all made up for now. And I was a peevish wretch; but I was at so cruel a disadvantage—the fear of finding myself trying to supplant my own brother was for ever before me—and, indeed, the thought of what I must say to him embitters even this moment."

"I will tell him myself," said Althea. "You shall carry the letter. I will tell him I always knew you for what you are. 'Twas that enraged me—I saw you, as I thought, obstinately bent on espousing a bad cause, yet felt myself forced to honour you. I'm not converted to that cause; but now——"

"Well, my staunch Althea," said Jasper, as she paused, "what do you say now? you will not hurt me—but let me hold your hand while you say it."

"Now," she replied, pressing his hand to her heart, "now, I remember what you said to me once—that 'tis of less moment what part we take, than how and out of what motives we take it. Whatever regrets I may have as to the part you have taken, I know you have taken it heroically. But oh, my dear, my dear! when I think that in a day or two at most you must go away into an enemy's camp—and that the next time you meet those masqueraders we hear making merry, it may be in battle, I know not how to bear it!"

She clung to him, as though they were to part that moment.

"My poor girl," he said sadly, "you should not have loved a rebel! 'Tis hard to think that we only meet to part—Philadelphia is certain to be evacuated as soon as the French fleet arrives—and you, I suppose, will go to New York, where you will be as far out of my reach as ever."

"There's a great talk of our going," replied Althea; "and some say that Sir Henry has positive orders—but nothing is publicly known. And if we go," she added, with anguish in her voice, "we shall never get to New York without another battle!"

"We are all in God's hands," said Jasper solemnly; "and to Him I commend myself and you."

* * * * *

It was a warm summer's night, but Jasper must needs wrap Althea in the cloak which had caused all the mischief. "It will keep me all the warmer hereafter," he said gallantly—but Althea shivered, and begged him not to talk of the future. This was not difficult, where there was so much to say of the past.

It occurs at last, even to lovers, that the night is far spent—an uneasy sense of this fact (suggested by the first faint grayness of the dawn) had begun to afflict Althea's mind, even before they heard a step crunching the gravel behind them.

"'Tis Fred, come to look for me," said Althea—hastily throwing off Jasper's martial garment, and rising from her seat.

"Jack André said I should find you out here," said Fred, as he came up. "My dear Fleming," he added, grasping Jasper's hand with a great deal of feeling, and all but embracing him, "I'm truly glad—I mean, of course, I'm truly sorry! But perhaps you don't know that we heard you was killed outright? I assure you, my dear fellow, I'm more sorry for this misfortune than I know how to tell you—and if I don't seem as much so as I am, 'tis because we all made certain as you was killed—Cousin Maverick had a letter from Boston to say so, and how cut up your uncle was about it."

"I know that such a report reached him," said Jasper; "but as I wrote to him instantly, I cannot think how you heard it. I assure you, I deeply feel your kind expressions——"

"You don't, I hope, take me for a brute," said Fred. This was a thrust intended for Althea, who was standing a little way off, and had, Fred fancied—it was a pure fancy—tossed her head at these kind expressions. "Besides, you know that, rebel or not, I've a great regard for you personally. I wonder we never heard of your being alive—but I fancy you've known a deal more in your camp of what was going on inside the town, nor we've ever been able to find out about you."

Jasper laughed. "We have, I think, had a pretty good

general idea of your past proceedings," he said. "Your intentions just now are not quite equally clear to us—but about them I must not ask you."

"'Tis a cursed shame you and Noel aint of our side!" cried Fred. "By the bye, I aint asked you how he is? Did I hurt him much? Has he told you we encountered each other on the field of Stillwater? I promise you, I had but just time to turn the flat of my sword! But I'm confident I did turn it——"

"He appears none the worse for it now," replied Jasper; "and he has told me that he saw you start back, as you perceived who it was you was cutting down. He told me, too, what a determined stand you made——"

"We was destroyed, Fleming—poor General Burgoyne was destroyed—sent to his perdition by a cowardly traitor! If there don't some impeachments come out of that affair, there's no justice left in England!" cries Fred. "But, thank God, Noel hath gotten over the hurt I gave him! 'Twas an ill return to make him for preserving me from the savages—but I took him for General Arnold. Well, 'tis growing monstrous late, and Cousin Maverick is gone home, and desired me to bring Ally. May we not see you? We're in Market Street, just opposite the *Paracelsus' Head*—the house has got two dormer windows painted green—that is, Ally and Cousin Maverick are there, and I'm always in and out."

"I will certainly do myself the pleasure of calling," returned Jasper, as Fred shook him cordially by the hand.

"By the bye," he said, "where are you to sleep? Can I do anything for you? Pray command me!"

Jasper replied that Captain André had offered to accommodate him—adding that he must go in and find him, but would enjoy the cool of the garden a few minutes longer first. Jasper felt that he must be alone a few moments, before he faced strangers.

"Well, good-night, my dear fellow—let us see you to-morrow," said Fred, once more shaking his hand. "I'm most rejoiced to hear that Noel is well—he hath, I assure you, been much on my mind."

Then they said good-night again; and Fred and Althea went up the steps into the great hall, which was now nearly deserted, though the dancing was still going on above.

"How pale you look, Ally!" exclaimed Fred, when they

came into the full light. "I hope you aint heard any bad news?"

"One may look tired, I suppose, at three in the morning—for I suppose 'tis near that," says Althea. "'Tis certainly very near dawn."

"I'll lay my life she has been crying," thought Fred, while Althea found her muffler. "I wonder what they've talked about! I'll not pump her to-night—she seems a little put out. I always thought she'd a leaning towards Branhxholm, and of course she naturally feels seeing his brother. I hope, Ally, that you told Colonel Fleming we should be glad to see him," he said, as they went out into the street. "I fancied you was rather cool, when I invited him. I thought you had got over your old dislike to him—and, rebel though he may be, I've the greatest possible regard for him, and you'll much oblige me by showing him some attention."

"I consider I have already shown Colonel Fleming as much attention as he can possibly expect," said Althea in an odd tone—which Fred took for obstinacy.

"I vow, Ally, I've never been able to understand you!" he said, much annoyed. "No man ever had a more affectionate sister than I've found in you—and yet sometimes I've seen you show what in any other woman I should say was a downright want of feeling! I should have thought you'd have been a little affected at seeing poor Fleming mangled like that! No one ever called me soft-hearted that I'm aware of, but when Jack André told me, it gave me quite a turn—I aint got over it yet. 'Tis a misfortune, let me remind you, that might befall me any day! I thought there was a great want of feeling in your manner, when you bid him good-night. Now I come to think of it, I don't believe as you did bid him good-night—I don't believe as you took the trouble to speak—and I fear Fleming must have observed it. But I've always heard say as women can be harder-hearted than men!"

Fred walked home in a fume, resolved, by marked attention on his own part, to show Colonel Fleming that he at least did not forget the obligations of friendship and humanity. If he, who really had some ground for considering Fleming as his rival, could afford to be generous, 'twas hard indeed if Ally could not be decently civil!

CHAPTER XI.

AN EXCHANGE OF CIVILITIES.

FRED came in late to dinner, next day, full of all that he and Jack André and the rest had been doing at Walnut-Grove—packing up, and returning the pier-glasses, lustres, candlesticks, and all the other borrowed articles.

"We've sent 'em all back decked out just as they was, and there aint a single one of 'em broke," he remarked, with much complacency. "Hang me, if I don't think Jack André's the cleverest fellow I ever knew in my life! And I shall always think, Ally, as you might have had him, if you'd have chose to."

"Thank you, dear brother—you flatter me inexpressibly," replied Althea—in a tone which kept the exact equilibrium between earnest and jest. Fred looked hard at her.

"I don't believe you mean that," he said. "It's my opinion, Ally, as you've a deuced deal too good an opinion of yourself to feel flattered at any man's admiring you."

"Dear brother, if we was not at table, I would make you a curtsy," said his sister. "I wish, though, you'd tell me where you learned so much about me, and women in general? 'Tis a complete mystery to me—but I think it dates from Boston."

At this home-thrust, Fred reddened—but Mrs. Maverick, who was serving the custard, saved him the trouble of making a counter-hit, by observing that Boston had had a good deal to do with other folks as she could mention. At which Althea's cheeks became redder than the rose which blows in June, and Fred determined to try and get out of her what Fleming had said; whatever it was, it had upset her a good deal, and she didn't seem to have got over it yet.

Fred presently observed—keeping his eye fixed on his sister as he spoke—that he had met Colonel Fleming, that morning, going to wait upon Sir Henry. Althea undoubtedly blushed again, but she ate her custard diligently, and as she never raised her eyes from her plate, Fred was able to give his mind to watching her. He was so intent on doing this, that he returned unmeaning answers to several of Mrs. Maverick's questions, and caused that good lady to say sarcastically that he was so absent, one would think he was in love—on which Fred

blushed himself, but protested that he was half-asleep, and had nearly dropped off, while they was packing up the mirrors.

Mrs. Maverick had heard from Captain André that Colonel Fleming was in Philadelphia, come in about the removal of the Convention troops from Cambridge—the Captain had, however, honourably abstained from mentioning that Althea was at that moment talking to him out in the garden. She had heard about his wound, and was particular to ask Fred how he was looking—'twas a shocking thing, to be sure, she remarked, and, for her part, she bore the poor young man no ill-will, and indeed had always liked him, ever since he was, as one might say, her prisoner. Mrs. Maverick never forgot that she was a cousin of Governor Hutchinson's (a great man once, though his star had now set), and always spoke as though she were a component part of the Powers that Be. Having expressed herself thus kindly, and seen that the cloth was laid smoothly away in the high chest of drawers, she retired to take her afternoon nap.

Thus left alone with Ally, Fred cast about for the best way to begin pumping her as to what Fleming might have said about Mary. Fred had stolen an hour from his task of dismantling Walnut-Grove, to indite a letter to Mary, but was not quite sure if he had the courage to send it.

He had just asked—with a much overdone unconcern—whether Colonel Fleming had told her anything very particular last night, when the Colonel himself was announced. Fred received him with a warmth which might fairly be called brotherly, and which Althea was wicked enough to secretly enjoy, though she was very far indeed from feeling light-hearted.

The Colonel, it appeared, was to return to Mr. Washington's camp that very afternoon—indeed his horses were waiting at the door—but would not go without paying his respects to Mrs. Maverick. He did not add, "and Miss Digby," and Fred was confirmed in his persuasion that Fleming was hurt by Ally's unfeelingness last night.

Hearing that Mrs. Maverick was gone to take a little rest after yesterday's fatigue, he begged she might not be disturbed on his account; and, in answer to Captain Digby's inquiries, said that his mother and cousin were in camp, and had been there all the winter. On hearing this, Fred's heart sank at least four feet below its normal level, and felt as though it had taken up a permanent residence in his boots. He saw it all—

Mary had gone to be near Jasper! Mary, who was always all kindness and affection, would of course be fonder of him now than ever!

As he was hastily revolving these agonising apprehensions, it suddenly occurred to him, by a sort of inspiration, that perhaps if he left Ally alone with the Colonel for a few minutes, he might be more confidential. It would be better to know the worst; it might be no use to send that letter.

"If you'll excuse me a moment, Fleming, I'll fetch Cousin Maverick," he observed—adding with Macchiavellian cunning,—
"She'll never forgive it, if she don't see you."

"Is it true, Althea?" said Jasper, as soon as Fred's departing steps were heard mounting the uncarpeted oak stairs.
"How shall I assure myself I am not dreaming?"

The look Althea gave him was assurance enough; Colonel Fleming took courage from it, however, to assure himself still further, by an embrace to which she did not offer the least demur.

"And yet I fear I wrong you," he said, after what seemed a long silence. "How will your brother take it, when he hears of it? Am I not bringing you misfortune?"

"Fred rated me soundly last night, for not showing you sufficient attention—I told him I believed I'd shown you all you could expect, and he replied that I was an unfeeling wretch, and lectured me all the way home."

Althea said this, with one hand resting on his shoulder, and the other holding him by the breast of his coat (as Jasper's only arm was just then round her waist), and looking into his eyes with so much loving mischief in her own—though it was plain enough that there were tears not far behind the smile—that she completely turned his head, and he said no more about being a rebel, and bringing her unhappiness, but only repeated that he could not believe it; 'twas, he said, a thousand times too good to be true!

These tender passages, however satisfactory to the parties immediately concerned, were by no means what Captain Digby had intended, in leaving his sister and Colonel Fleming to a *tête-à-tête*. While they were making love, he was literally kicking his heels outside Mrs. Maverick's door, and trying to calculate how long it would be best to give them.

"'Twould be a pity to have Cousin Maverick go in just as Fleming had begun to be confidential," he sagely reflected;

and there is no knowing how long he might not have delayed, but that in one of the kicks in dumb-show, with which he was beguiling the time, he mistook his distance, and brought his foot against the panel of the door—with such prodigious effect that Mrs. Maverick hurriedly presented herself, all dishevelled from her afternoon nap.

“In Heaven’s name, what is the matter?” she exclaimed.

“Nothing—nothing at all; I fell against the door—caught my foot, I suppose,” stammered Fred, examining the offending member, as though he expected to find in it some explanation of the accident. “Colonel Fleming has come to pay his respects to you, that’s all—he’s downstairs——”

“I must say, Fred, you are the very awkwardest young man I ever knew,” said Mrs. Maverick, whose temper was as much ruffled as her attire by this rude awakening. “I do believe you’ve split the panel! Go down and tell Mr. Fleming I’m coming this instant; and pray be a little more thoughtful—you really behave like a bear in a china shop!”

Mrs. Maverick greeted Jasper very kindly, and never once uttered the word “rebel”—contenting herself with shaking her head as she lamented the sad times they lived in, and only referring in the most general terms to wrong-headed politicians, and the Best of Sovereigns. It was evident that Jasper’s empty sleeve disconcerted the good old lady’s logic quite as much as it appealed to her sympathy—perhaps she felt that argument would be thrown away on a man who had given such a pledge of his obstinacy. So, after a few very feeble struggles to testify to her principles, she allowed her heart to get the better of her. When he rose to take his leave, she pressed his hand in both hers, and, with tears in her eyes, assured him that she wished him well. “We will not say anything about anything else,” she said, patting his hand. “I wish you well from my heart, and I hope we may yet meet in better times.”

“My dear Madam,” replied Jasper, gallantly kissing her hand, “believe me, I feel your goodness deeply; but I already owe you a long account, which I can never hope to discharge.”

Althea was not in the room while these compliments were being exchanged—she had excused herself for a moment, that she might fetch a letter she had written to Mary, and which she had begged Colonel Fleming to favour. Fred took the opportunity of his sister’s absence to observe that he was very glad they were soon to leave Philadelphia—Ally had never been

well, or in spirits, since they came, though Heaven knew 'twas not for want of diversion. But somehow or other, ever since they came there, Ally had been out of sorts, and not like herself. Did not Colonel Fleming think her looking very pale?

But before the Colonel could answer this question (artfully intended by Fred as a sort of indirect apology for Althea's cold demeanour last night), Mrs. Maverick struck in, and said that 'twas no wonder if Althea looked pale, after being up more than half the night—and all the excitement of yesterday—and especially the extreme sultry weather.

"I'm sure I never felt so oppressed as I did while they was letting off the fireworks," she remarked. "I thought I must have fainted, and Althea felt it more than me—she went off in a dead faint, just as they was showing the figure of Fame. I never knew any one go off more sudden in my life—I heard her give a sort of gasp, and before I could get hold of her, she was off. I never felt such a dead weight; and when she came to, she was all of a tremble, and talking quite wild about something she fancied she'd seen down in the garden. I never knew her to faint before, all the time I've known her."

During this affecting recital, Colonel Fleming had the awkwardness to let fall his hat, which in a fidgety moment he had taken from the table where he had laid it down. Fred sprang to pick it up, but the Colonel had already recovered it, and seemed somewhat embarrassed at having been so clumsy; he bit his lip, and positively blushed, as he caught Mrs. Maverick's eye.

At this instant, Althea returned with a small packet.

"I was just telling Mr. Fleming, my dear," says Mrs. Maverick—with the good-natured intention of covering his confusion—"how indisposed you was last night; no one could wonder at it, I'm sure—I felt exactly the same myself—I can't imagine why I didn't go off too."

Althea crimsoned, as her eyes met Colonel Fleming's, and Fred, who was looking at her, said to himself that Ally's pride was beyond everything—of course, she was furious now at anybody's knowing she could faint like other people. He expected a sarcastic remark; but Althea (still with flaming cheeks) put the packet into the Colonel's hand civilly enough, and even smiled as she said,—

"I have left it unsealed, that you may convince yourself

you are not being made the bearer of a treasonable correspondence."

"I hope she's took my words last night to heart," thinks Fred, on hearing this condescending speech.

The Colonel, as he took charge of the packet, observed that he hoped to deliver it that same night. Fred, upon this, begged to send his particular respects to the ladies, and added that Colonel Fleming might rely on his doing all that lay in his power, should either the ladies or Noel ever happen to be in need of any assistance.

"After what happened to poor General Burgoyne," he observed handsomely, "anything might happen to anybody, you know." At which naïve remark Colonel Fleming smiled, but thanked him kindly.

"I'll ride with you as far as the outpost," said Fred, when Jasper would have bade him farewell. "I've sent for a horse."

Then Jasper took Althea by the hand, and seemed for a moment as if he would say something. But he only kissed her hand, and went away without a word, Fred following him down.

Althea ran to the window, and leaned out. The street was half in sunshine, half in shadow. Colonel Fleming's black servant was holding his own and his master's horse—the latter was very impatient of standing. Fred's servant had just brought up the horse which he usually hired when he rode out in Philadelphia.

Althea saw the gentlemen come out from under the porch, and Fred hold the Colonel's stirrup while he mounted, and she heard him ask Jasper if he had got his pass ready to show. Jasper looked up, and bowed to the ladies at the window, just before they rode away.

"Good-bye ! good-bye !" cried Althea, waving her handkerchief ; and then they all clattered off. Althea watched them till they turned a corner and vanished.

"I'm sure I don't wonder you feel it, my dear," said Mrs. Maverick, seeing that Althea's eyes were overflowing—and wiping her own spectacles as she spoke.

Meanwhile, Fred was adroitly engaging Colonel Fleming to speak of Mary. "By the way," he said, as they came in sight of the guard-house, where the pass must be shown, "I had almost forgot"—this was a gross falsehood, for he had thought of little else all the way—"I should have enclosed this letter

with my sister's; but perhaps you will do me the kindness to give it for me to Miss Mary—I thought she might be amused with a little account of our Mischianza; perhaps we could put it up all under one in the packet you are kindly favouring——”

“I will not wait to do it now,” said Jasper—who had observed that Althea's packet was directed to himself, “but if you will entrust your letter to me, I'll undertake my cousin gets it as soon as possible.”

Fred insisted on accompanying Jasper as far as the outpost near the lime-kiln—whence, it was said, shrieks had been heard on windy nights, ever since Sykes the spy got tossed in and burned alive, in his struggle with a party that had waylaid him.

“I always thought the fellow looked a sneak,” observed Fred, commenting on this gruesome story. “It would take a great deal to make me go as a spy, even in an honourable way; but a fellow as can turn on his own friends *must* be a hound!”

They parted at last, with many expressions of mutual goodwill, and hopes on Fred's side for a speedy peace.

“I hope so indeed,” said Jasper. “But, then, fighting is not my trade.”

“It is mine,” said Fred. “But I never bargained for such a war as this. I don't wonder Keppel wouldn't serve. However, it can't last much longer. The Commissioners will set everything straight, as it was before.”

“My dear fellow,” said Jasper, “if you mean they can undo the past, I fear that's impossible. We can no more go back to what we were fifteen years ago, than you can go back and be seven years old again, with all your battles unfought—and you would, or I'm much mistaken, rather fight them over again than never have smelt powder.”

Fred laughed at this, but could not deny it. “But I don't see as it proves you can never be happy again under King George,” he said. “However, I think a man ought to take a side and stick to it; and I daresay if I'd have been born over here, I might have seen things different. I know, if I was a Tory Provincial, I couldn't do as some of 'em do—burning their old neighbours' houses over their heads, and shooting 'em down as if they was Indians, or wild beasts. Your uncle is too much of a gentleman to do that. When he was asked if he'd raise a

corps like De Lancey's, he said he'd never take up arms against his countrymen, however mistaken he might think 'em; and he forbade his son to do so either."

"Did he say that?" asked Jasper, his eyes kindling. "But indeed his heart was always wiser than his head! Good-bye, Captain Digby, and thank you for coming so far with me. We are, I hope, enemies that wish each other well, and would be friends if we could."

"The Commissioners will make us all friends, if you'll only listen to 'em," cried Fred, wringing Jasper's hand. "God bless you, Fleming, and don't forget the messages I gave you!"

Fred turned his horse's head, and rode slowly back, trying to recall the most important phrases of the letter which he had entrusted to Colonel Fleming. "Some people might have advised me to wait," he reflected; "but God knows when I might be able to get a letter to her again. Of course, if she does like Fleming, there's an end of it; but, after all, they've known each other all their lives, and may be only like brother and sister. Her being a rebel makes a confounded complication; but I'll eat my head, if Ally aint come to some sort of an understanding with the Colonel about Noel—and if she can get over the being a rebel, I don't see why I shouldn't. I'm sure, if the Commissioners bring 'em to reason, and my poor uncle's affairs should be settled anything like fair, there's many things I should like worse than turning Virginian planter, like old Butler. How pleased Fleming was, to be sure! I always admired the speech myself—the Roman father somewhere says something like it, I fancy—only, I think, that was in blank verse. I dare say he'll tell Mary."

Thus lost in thought, Captain Digby had jogged back as far as the guard-house, when he heard a voice close to him cry out,—“Hallo! my dear fellow! don't ride me down!” and perceived Jack André, coming jauntily along on foot.

“I saw you riding off with your rebel friend,” said André, eyeing him narrowly as he spoke. “I hope there are not many more like him among Washington's rabble—there'll be Old Harry to pay if there are. He is so damnably reasonable and cool. Your sister looked at him monstrous kind, I fancied, last night.”

“You're out for once, Jack,” returned Fred. “Ally never could abide him. 'Tis incomprehensible to me, for I should

have thought he was just the man to take her fancy—she was always fonder of learning nor me, and Fleming's quite the scholar. I really can't think how he learned so much, never having been in England. As soon as ever I came to know him though, I took to him amazingly—but, somehow or other, Ally and he never got on together. I've had to tell her once or twice that I thought she carried it too far."

"I did not observe the least appearance of dislike, I assure you," said André drily. "She concealed it perfectly from me. 'Tis odd she don't like him. By all the rules of natural perversity, she should have a vast admiration for him. Pope says—

'Every woman is at heart a rake;'

but perhaps he slandered the sex there. But 'tis certainly true that every woman hath a spice of rebellion in her composition—as we, poor devils, are always finding out to our cost; and I am magnanimous enough to allow that Colonel Fleming is an interesting rebel. He is a soldierly figure, and there's a stern republican plainness about him, which compels a sort of respect; and when he speaks, he speaks most confoundedly to the point. Then, too, that empty sleeve becomes him. I promise you, Digby, I should consider him a dangerous rival, was I about to enter the lists against him."

"He aint the least in the world of a ladies' man, though," said Fred—André had turned, and was walking beside his horse.

"All the more dangerous, then," replied André. "'Tis a fatal mistake to be too much of a ladies' man—that is, if one wishes to succeed with any one of 'em in particular."

"I've heard say the women like to conquer a conqueror," observed Fred sagely.

"Shallow philosophy, my dear fellow! they love a thousand times better to take a fort reputed impregnable."

"You've no great cause to complain, Jack—the women are all monstrous civil to you, I'm sure!"

"I was born under an unlucky star," said André, sighing. "And, if there's any truth in dreams, I am to die on a gibbet—I've told you the story. But I trust we shall soon have something else to think about than women's frowns. Your Colonel is off just in time—Sir Henry has heard by his spies that the Marquess La Fayette hath crossed the Schuykil and is encamped on Barren Hill—doubtless, to watch our movements; and

General Grant with Simcoe and the Rangers are to march to-night, in the hopes of cutting him off."

Mrs. Maverick observed to Althea, as they drank tea, that Mr. Fleming was certainly a perfectly well-bred young man—not so handsome as his brother—Virginians were much handsomer than New Englanders—but decidedly interesting. Althea did not speak, but Mrs. Maverick saw with considerable satisfaction that she wiped away a few tears, and did not even seem to care to hide them. In spite of all that Mrs. Maverick had said in Captain André's favour, in her heart she preferred Noel Branhholm; and seeing Althea in this unusually tender mood, she was at the moment engaged in the process known as putting two and two together—the two being, of course, Althea and Noel.

"Mr. Fleming seems to me to have more confidence than he used to have," she went on. "Though, to be sure," she said—interrupting herself as she recalled many passages of words in Boston—"he was always uncommon obstinate in his opinions. I thought him remarkable cheerful, considering all he has gone through. I used to fancy his spirits was rather low, when he was our prisoner. 'Tis an odd idea that a young man should be more cheerful than usual, when he has just lost an arm; but Mr. Fleming certainly appears to be in uncommon good spirits. I shouldn't be in the least surprised but what Mr. Washington (Mrs. Maverick would not have called him General for the world) has got something in the wind, and the knowledge of it hath put Mr. Fleming in spirits."

So much did this explanation of Colonel Fleming's state of mind commend itself to Mrs. Maverick, that she imparted it to Fred—begging him to keep his eyes open, in case anything was to be attempted.

"As for your sister," she added very significantly, "I don't know what Mr. Fleming may have said to her about Noel, but there's no doubt she's very much softened—I was particular struck by her manner to Mr. Fleming this afternoon."

"Well, I fancy, he's got me to thank for that," said Fred, in a lower voice than usual, lest Ally should hear—although she was not in the room at the moment. "She provoked me into telling her what I thought of her t'other night—I will say for her she took it very well—and I think it made some impression upon her."

CHAPTER XII.

VALLEY FORGE.

With loud peals of laughter your sides, sirs, would crack,
 To see General Convict and Colonel Shoeblack,
 With their hunting-shirts and rifle-guns.

* * * * *
 See cobblers and quacks, rebel priests, and the like,
 Pettifoggers and barbers, with sword and with pike,
 All strutting the Standard of Satan beside,
 And honest names using their black deeds to hide,
 With their hunting-shirts and rifle-guns.—THE REBELS.

It is necessary to return to the events which immediately succeeded Sir John Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga.

As Jasper had told Althea, Noel had been with him in the camp at Valley Forge during a considerable part of the winter which was so merry for the King's friends in Philadelphia, and so much the reverse for the rebels outside.

Captain Digby's anxious inquiries after his friend had been by no means superfluous. Noel felt the effects of his blow (mitigated as it was) for many days, but, except some weakness from loss of blood, had nearly recovered before the Convention of Saratoga was signed.

General Arnold was carried to Albany a day or two after the Second Battle of Bemis' Heights, and here Noel found him, when the army moved thither immediately after Sir John Burgoyne's surrender. Arnold's wound was even more serious than had been supposed at first, and made him excessively fretful and impatient. He received Noel with his usual kindness; but Surgeon Thacher confided to him that the General had nearly driven him wild, when he sat up of nights with him. Besides his physical sufferings, he was justly indignant at the distinctions showered upon Gates, in whose honour Congress had ordered a medal to be struck—while he himself had not been so much as mentioned in the despatches.

Towards the end of October, Major Hamilton came to Albany, and from him Noel had a full account of the Battle of Germantown, and learned for the first time that his brother had been wounded there. He soon after received a letter from Jasper himself, who was then at Lancaster, whither Mrs. Branholt had gone before Philadelphia was occupied.

General Gates was soon ordered to recover the forts on the Hudson, and the New Year had begun before Noel could get leave of absence. By that time, Arnold had received through His Excellency the long-delayed commission, which was to give him his proper precedence. The General showed it to Noel, when the latter went to bid him farewell.

"Having made Conway a Major-General, they could scarce withhold from me this tardy justice," he said. "Schuyler has just had a letter, which says the cabal has burst like a bubble, and everybody eating his words as fast as he can swallow 'em down."

"I'm sure, sir," returned Noel, "our army is loyal to His Excellency, and will never listen to these snakes-in-the-grass—any more than 'twill ever forget who they were that really beat General Burgoyne."

"As soon as these cursed dolts of surgeons patch me up, I shall go to New Haven," observed the General. "A prophet, 'tis said, hath no honour in his own country; yet I think I have some friends there, besides my sister, good soul, and my children—who may learn from their father's experience the vanity of expecting justice in this world."

"You will be done justice to hereafter, sir—time tries all," says Noel. "His Excellency bids fair to vanquish all his enemies by simply continuing in his own course, and so will you. I trust, sir, to fight under you yet, where there shall be none to rob you of your credit."

"I must first heal me of my wounds," says the General, with a groan. "I believe I know more surgery than these ignor-amuses who come and shake their wise heads over me. Can you believe, Branhholm, that I ever drove pills at New Haven? Well, you shall hear of me as soon as I am able to stir."

Noel went at once to Valley Forge, being charged with a letter from General Arnold to His Excellency. The country was under snow, all the way from Albany. At every tavern he stopped at, Noel was closely questioned for news; and when his questioners found that he was an officer of General Gates's army, the whole village usually assembled to hear all he had to say about Sir John Burgoyne's defeat, and the Convention of Saratoga; and he took care, in telling his story, to do justice to the share which General Arnold had in those famous events.

It was somewhat after noon, on a gray and bleak February day, that Noel reached the outposts at the foot of the valley—

having narrowly escaped capture by one of those bands of armed loyalists which scoured the neighbourhood of Philadelphia. He presented his pass, and, inquiring the way to headquarters, learned that His Excellency was at Pott's House, down by the Old Forge. He had nearly got there, when he met an officer, so muffled up in his cloak that Noel had nearly passed him, being intent on leading his tired horse over some very bad ground.

"Why, Noel, boy, do you pass by your old father?" cries the officer, letting the cloak fall from his face, and displaying to the shrill south-easter the features of General Branzholm.

"Your mother's here," said the General, when they had done embracing each other. "'Twas none of my doings; but she said if Mrs. Washington could endure it, she could. So when Jasper joined his regiment—which he did as soon as ever the surgeons would hear of it—she came, and Mary with her—and here they've been ever since, never grumbling at anything, though they've been half-froze, and more than half-starved! There's women for you, sir, if you like! There's devotion!"

"My mother, sir, minds nothing but being parted from you," said Noel, in answer to this eulogy.

"That's true enough, boy—though I vow it makes me ashamed I aint more worthy of it," cried the General. "Whatever you do, Noel, my boy, get a wife as loves you. How I pity poor devils whose wives don't care about 'em! Well, we're all in a log-house a mile or so up the valley, next to General Greene's quarters—all but Jasper—he's quartered a little higher up still. You've heard, I suppose, how infamously His Excellency has been served?"

"I've heard, sir, of the hardships the army has suffered."

"Left without rations or blankets," cried the General, "while those infernal pettifoggers at York Town badger him to recover Philadelphia! Thanks to Mr. Lawrence Fleming, my brigade and Jasper's regiment aint absolutely naked. The old gentleman set off for Lancaster as soon as he heard Jasper was wounded, and he's done a deal for us. But we've been sacrificed to a parcel of plotters, who only care to plant their own creatures in the posts of honour. Had His Excellency been properly supported, Philadelphia had never been lost. You'll find Jasper every bit as enraged at it as I am—he's every inch a soldier, if he is a merchant's son, and brought up a lawyer too—he has no more patience than I have with those rascally scribblers! D—— 'em!"

General Branhholm had turned, and was walking beside his son. When they reached headquarters, His Excellency, being much engaged, merely received the letters which Noel had to deliver to him, and desired him to wait upon him next day, as there were many things he wished to hear from an officer so lately come from the Northern army.

Being thus quickly released from attendance, Noel retired, and found his father waiting for him. As they plodded along over the crackling snow, every now and then passing a ghostly sentinel, the landscape became wilder at every step, but trees, rocks, and steep hillsides were all wrapped in one snowy winding-sheet, and the fresh-falling flakes which the wind drove up behind them were as fine as dust.

"I wish we'd got Congress here!" says the General, breasting the hill gallantly. "I only wish I could see 'em all packed into a log-hut, and obliged to sit up all night round their fire for want of a blanket to cover 'em! And no shoes! Let 'em sit there and write their remonstrances! Faugh!"

Having sworn considerably, the General declared he felt better than he had done this long while, and was beginning to tell Noel that Mrs. Greene had made her house into a hospital for the sick and frost-bitten men, and that Mrs. Branhholm and Mary were always in and out, looking after the poor fellows—when a sharp turn by a projecting rock brought them to his quarters.

"Who's this, Myra?" cries the General, pushing Noel before him into the room on the right of the door. But Mrs. Branhholm was not there—it was Mary who cried, "Noel!" and whom Noel caught in his arms, and kissed so heartily. Mary turned very pale, and cried a little—it was, she said, only the suddenness—and then she flushed up a beautiful colour, and said it was because she was so glad.

The next minute, Mrs. Branhholm herself came running in, letting the great camlet cloak she was wrapt in fall to the ground in her eagerness.

"Where is he? where is he?" she cried; "I heard at General Greene's quarters that he was come! Oh, my darling boy——"

She passionately embraced him, and called him her brave Noel, her young hero—asked him if he had expected to find her there—and finally burst into tears, and wept upon his breast.

"She has had a cruel hard time of it, I promise you, Noel," says the General, the tears running down his own cheeks without disguise. "Let her cry, 'tis only joy."

"Yes," she sobbed, "joy at receiving him safe and sound—but he's no prodigal!"

"Nor will his elder brother grudge him his welcome," said Mary, who had not yet recovered her own equanimity.

"Why, where is Jasper?" cries Noel, looking round.

"He aint far off. I've sent up to his quarters," says General Branhholm. "Mary, if there was anything to sit upon, I daresay the boy would as lief sit as stand. I doubt he's had better quarters in Albany, but we can muster up a chair or two—and there's the settle, where we can sit all of a row. We reckon ourselves in clover, I can tell you, Noel, to have a house over our heads at all."

As he spoke, General Branhholm threw some more logs on the fire—it was burning on a large open hearth, and its glow filled every corner of the low irregularly-shaped room. The window was so frozen, that the snow outside could only be distinguished by its chilly glimmer.

"'Tis very cold to be sure—but, after all, what is it to our first winter? If you had seen us as we marched to Quebec——"

Noel was indulging in this little piece of braggadocio, when they heard the sentinel give the challenge.

"'Tis Jasper!" cries Noel, running out into the passage. The meeting between the brothers was extremely tender, and when they came in, it was easy to see that they had both been greatly moved. As Noel's eyes fell on Jasper's mutilated arm, the love and admiration he had always felt for him increased to a sort of veneration—all the more that Jasper took his misfortune so gallantly. He had, indeed, never seemed in gayer spirits, and Mary looked at him in wonder, and began to ask herself if she had been mistaken in her suspicions. Mrs. Branhholm's content was troubled by none of these misgivings—though she, too, had perceived what she called "a dulness" in Jasper ever since his captivity in Boston. She sat between her sons, holding a hand of each, every now and then exclaiming that she had never hoped for such happiness as this again; and listening eagerly to Noel's now oft-told tale. He had, he declared, told it so often by the way that he had learned it by heart—but if so, his descriptions were none the less lively.

As for General Branzholm, he was much too excited to sit down. He walked about the room—now striking into Noel's narrative with some question, now beginning to tell his own tale—but always instantly breaking off to declare that Noel should finish his first.

"Go on, boy, go on!" cries the General. "What a satisfaction 'tis, to be sure, for us to be all together again!"

It was not until the General was called away, that Noel was permitted to satisfy his own curiosity. He had of course much to hear of the loss of Philadelphia, and of the unlucky issue of the admirably-contrived surprise of Germantown, which, —had the first advantage been immediately followed up—would almost certainly have resulted in as great a victory as that of Saratoga.

"I can forgive Noel for believing his General is more fortunate than mine," observed Jasper, when he had told how, in spite of a stubborn resistance, the British light-infantry was in full retreat along the street of Germantown, when Colonel Mulgrave threw himself into Justice Chew's house, and opened fire from the roof and upper windows. How by this delay, time and ammunition were wasted, and meanwhile the reinforcements under Cornwallis came hurrying up from the city. "I can forgive Noel for thinking his General the luckier," continued Jasper; "but the plan was most skilfully laid; and if His Excellency's orders had been followed out, even the mistake of stopping at Chew's would not have lost us the day. But when one General comes up near an hour late, and another disobeys the order to reserve his ammunition, and another is too drunk to obey orders at all, 'tis no wonder we were repulsed. It can scarce be called a defeat—there was no pursuit, and we only lost one gun, and I hear the British Generals have had us in much greater respect ever since."

"He does not say," said his mother, interrupting him, "that 'twas he, with a score or two he had rallied, that made a stand, and so gained time to get the artillery off—and even after he was wounded would not try to save himself till he saw it was safe, and was nearly made prisoner——"

"Dear mother, let us admit that I covered myself with glory," said Jasper, who was always uneasy when his own deeds were being talked about. "I'll tell you another time, Noel, how my brave fellows rescued me, and brought me off the field. But now let us hear more of your exploits; this is the first

time, I think, that a British army ever surrendered, and we cannot hear too much about it."

* * * * *

Noel was several times at headquarters, soon after his arrival in camp, and had an opportunity of speaking his mind there pretty plainly. Going to wait upon His Excellency one evening, whom does he find there but Wilkinson, who insists upon pouring his wrongs into Major Branhholm's unwilling ear, and by way of preface begs to be addressed as simply "Colonel"—having, he says, resigned his brigadiership, on hearing that forty-seven Colonels have remonstrated at his being promoted over their heads.

But it is the perfidy of General Gates which chiefly excites Colonel Wilkinson's eloquence. The Colonel was, it appears, on his way to York Town (there to enter on his duties as Secretary to the new Board of War), when he heard at Lancaster that General Gates had been publicly denouncing him as a liar and traitor. "Try to imagine, if you can,—but I defy you to do it,—my amazement at this incomprehensible enmity, broke out on a sudden and unprovoked on the part of one I have been accustomed to look on as a father!" says the injured Wilkinson, appealing to Major Branhholm—who, not knowing very well what to say (being acquainted with the other side of the story), discreetly holds his tongue, and lets Wilkinson run on.

Wilkinson goes on to tell how he hereupon wrote to General Gates, that, in consideration of the disparity of years and rank between them and of their former connection, he would descend to ask an explanation; and how the General replied by a letter which made matters worse than ever—the fact being that in it Gates distinctly charged him with having himself betrayed the secret, and then tried to fix the blame on Colonel Troup.

Finding remonstrance thrown away, Wilkinson hastened on to York Town, and sent the General a challenge. They were to meet behind the English church, at eight in the morning, and fight with pistols. A little before eight next morning, accordingly, Wilkinson and his second are sallying forth, when Colonel Stoddart comes to say that General Gates is outside, and wants to speak with Colonel Wilkinson!

Gentlemen about to give each other a hostile meeting do not usually confer together at the last moment; but what can Wilkinson do? There is the General waiting outside, alone and unarmed! So Wilkinson steps out.

"'Tis impossible, my dear Major Branhholm, to describe my emotions on seeing him," continues Wilkinson. "He received me with tenderness—an odd word, I admit," for Major Branhholm had smiled—"but also with a manifest embarrassment, and asked me to walk. We turned into a back street, and was both of us silent till we had got beyond the houses. Then he bursts into tears, takes me by the hand, and asks how I could ever think he wished to injure me? I confess I was too affected to find an answer—and before I could speak, he went on to exclaim, '*I injure you! 'tis impossible!* As soon should I think of injuring my own child!' What could I do, my dear Major, but embrace him?" asks Wilkinson, much affected at his own recital.

All's well that ends well; and for General Gates, who by this timely shower effectually damped Colonel Wilkinson's powder, the affair may be said to have ended as well as could be wished. But Wilkinson had less reason to congratulate himself. Once well out of pistol-shot, the General changed his tone, and so unequivocally gave Wilkinson the cold shoulder at the Board, that after a very few days he requested leave of absence. Arrived at Valley Forge, he sought an interview with His Excellency.

"And what I've now learned of General Gates's falsehood and treachery makes it impossible I can ever serve under him again," says Gates's ex-mentor, philosopher, and friend, "and I shall say so in so many words. I could not have believed such duplicity possible! And after all I've done for him! Between you and me, Major Branhholm, if it hadn't have been for me, he would never have come off with so much credit at the Convention. He would have lowered his dignity at every step he took, if I'd not preserved him. He was going to receive Major Kingston without an intermediary! 'Twas I that took care of our dignity all through that affair—and now I am used with the blackest ingratitude, made the scape-goat for everybody's offences, and refused satisfaction on all hands!"

"Then has Lord Stirling refused to fight you?" asks Noel, who knows perfectly well what his lordship has done, but cannot resist the temptation to draw Wilkinson out.

"I—weakly, I fear—allowed myself to be persuaded only to demand from him an acknowledgment that the words was spoke during a convivial hour," replies Wilkinson, a little crest-fallen. "And, after all, what satisfaction would it give me to

shoot Stirling? 'Tis General Gates who is the real culprit, and I ought to put a bullet into him, if I do into anybody."

"I wonder you didn't, when you was in so fair a way to do it," observes Noel, who has been asking himself for some minutes whether loyalty to General Arnold does not demand that he shall himself pick a quarrel with Wilkinson, and have him out?

"What can you do, when a man old enough to be your father bursts into tears—a man, too, that you've looked up to as to a father?" asks Wilkinson piteously.

"From all you've said—and I've seen," says Noel, leaning carelessly against the door-post (for all this conversation has passed just outside headquarters), "I thought 'twas the other way, and that you was rather by way of being a father to General Gates."

"You may well say so, my dear Major!" cries Wilkinson, flattered by this intended sneer. "When I think of all I did for him, I ask myself, was there ever such treachery and ingratitude seen before?"

"His Excellency will see Major Branzholm," said one of the aides, putting his head out; and by the time Noel was dismissed, Wilkinson was gone—so General Arnold's wrongs went unavenged.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH NOEL TRIES TO MAKE OUT A MAP OF THE COUNTRY.

NOEL remained at Valley Forge, nominally attached to his father's staff. A pretty constant communication with Philadelphia was kept up, by means of spies, and full reports reached the camp of the manner in which the British army was beguiling the tedium of the winter. As the spring came on, and many successful raids for cattle were made, the condition of the army considerably improved, and the hopes of a French alliance raised every one's spirits—every one's, that is, except Jasper's. The more Noel thought about the matter, the more convinced he became that Jasper had something on his mind. Jasper's spirits had never been as demonstrative as his own, but there had always hitherto been a quiet genial cheerfulness about him, a wholesome disposition to make the best of things—and, above all, a keen sense of humour. In his gravest moments he had always been ready with some quaint or witty allusion. But

now, if he jested at all, his jests had a bitter flavour about them ; and his whole manner—or so Noel fancied—was that of a man who has ceased to expect that any good shall ever happen to him any more.

Yet Jasper was universally beloved and honoured. He had brought his regiment to a high state of discipline and efficiency ; and owing to his presence and exertions—when scarcely convalescent—he had got their wants better supplied than those of almost any other regiment in camp. It was known that he and his uncle, Mr. Lawrence Fleming, had pledged their credit for the so much needed supplies of blankets and clothing, which had at last come in. It was said that His Excellency (who was known to place great confidence in Colonel Fleming) had offered him the command of the Life-Guard—a body specially attached to the person of the Commander-in-Chief—but the Colonel had, with His Excellency's full approval, declined this honour, on the ground that he believed he could be more useful as an officer of artillery.

Jasper had fallen into a melancholy—Noel was sure of it. A dozen times at least, when he was on the point of bringing up the old subject, and discussing with him the chances of his ever meeting Miss Digby again, and of how she would be likely to receive him in that much-desired event—a dozen times at least had Noel hesitated, and finally left the words unsaid, as he looked at Jasper. He took to watching his brother, and saw that he often fell into fits of absence and silence. Casting about for what the cause could be, he had at last believed he had hit upon it, and he resolved to speak at the first opportunity.

It happened one afternoon that Jasper came down to his stepfather's quarters, and found Noel alone, and busy writing. Noel had, he said, all but finished his letter (which was to General Arnold, and was to go by an unexpected opportunity), and he begged his brother to excuse him for a few moments.

As Noel wrote, he glanced from time to time at Jasper, who was looking out of the window—whence, however, there was nothing to see but a rocky bank. As he stood there motionless, apparently studying this not very cheerful prospect, something in his attitude smote so painfully on Noel's heart that his eyes grew dim. On the impulse of the moment, he started up, and, going over to the window, put one arm round his brother's neck, and taking his hand with the other, said very earnestly—trying to look in Jasper's face,—

"Dear brother, what is it has changed you so? Nay, don't deny it, you are changed—you are grown so grave I scarce know you."

Jasper had made a slight movement as though he would escape from his brother's loving grasp, but Noel would not let him go.

"'Tis your fancy, dear boy," he said, finding himself fairly taken prisoner. "Or if I'm changed, 'tis only that I'm grown older, I suppose."

"We are both older," returned Noel, "and we have both of us had enough to make us sadder—yet nothing, I think, that should bring into your eyes the look I've often seen there of late. 'Tis a look as though—as though all was over with you. I've remarked it this long while, but had a delicacy in intruding on your confidence. But I can bear it no longer. There's a something, I'm convinced—our mother has observed it, and Mary——"

"Upon my word, 'tis rather embarrassing to be the object of such close inspection," exclaimed Jasper, flushing painfully. "I've a particular dislike to being watched——"

"Do you think those that love you can help watching you?" said Noel, determined to pursue the advantage he thought he had obtained. "You think you've hid this trouble at the bottom of your heart, dear brother, but we all see you aint yourself. There's something on your mind—some foolish idea, perhaps, which the mere putting into words would take half the sting from. Nay, Jasper," he insisted, as Jasper shook his head, "talking of a thing will often ease one's heart, and sometimes heal it. You cannot look me in the face, and tell me there's nothing troubles you."

Jasper did for one moment look at his brother—who had never relaxed his grip—but his eyes fell under Noel's as he said uneasily, with an attempt at an indifference which he evidently did not feel,—"'Tis true, dear Noel, I have for some time past felt a lowness of spirits—but 'twill pass, I doubt not. Do they not say some men are troubled with melancholy, in the spring of the year?"

"'Tis not that," said Noel, looking anxiously at his brother's averted face, and drawing him closer still; "the mischief lies deeper, I'm convinced—and if 'tis anything it would ease your mind to speak of freely——"

"Nay, dear brother," returned Jasper, still more uneasily,

and turning his face farther away, "the thing that troubles me cannot be mended by talking about it. Time, they say, is the surest panacea for most ills. I'm an unconscionable long while getting used to mine——"

"Then I'm right in my suspicion!" cried Noel, still trying to see his brother's face. "'Tis as I feared, and you are letting the loss of your arm prey upon your mind—some foolish fancy that you're disabled by it, I don't doubt, hath gotten possession of you——"

Jasper, who had for a moment changed countenance, recovered himself completely as Noel said this, and, interrupting him here, said, frankly meeting his eyes and smiling for the first time during the conversation,—

"My dear brother, if that were my only cause for uneasiness, I promise you I would be as cheerful as even you could desire me. 'Tis an inconvenience, of course; but I suppose we did not embark in this cause without counting the cost. But I confess there's something that troubles me—sometimes; but 'tis something that touches me much more nearly—I mean," he said as if correcting himself, "that while I was laid up, I had the more time for thinking of what can only be helped by forgetting it. Let's not speak of it."

"If you'll only speak and confide in me, there might be some help for it. Let me try to guess it, brother"—urged Noel, forcibly detaining Jasper's hand.

"No, no!" cried Jasper, turning pale. "I can tell no human ear, not even yours! 'Tis one of those things that words may make worse, but can never make better. I do not mean that there's any disgrace in it," he added hastily. "'Tis only irremediable."

He wrung his brother's hand, and threw himself into a chair. Noel looked at him anxiously.

"You have broke out all of a sweat," he said, touching Jasper's brow. "Tell me, at least—are you ill?"

"I am well enough in body," replied Jasper, summoning up a smile, as his brother stood watching him with a very puzzled and distressed expression; "and my mind is imbued with more philosophy than you, by your suspicion, gave me credit for."

"Philosophy is all very well; but I'd give all I have, to hear you make one of those sly jests you used to be so fond of," says Noel, still looking at him with tender uneasiness. "We used to be always laughing when we was together;

'tis always happiness to be with you, but you're grown so quiet——"

"Nay, call me a dull fellow at once, dear Noel," said Jasper, with a touch of that old humour which Noel had just been regretting. "But I'll throw it off, I promise you, I will! indeed, I believe the worst is over. Since you've come, I have felt much lighter in my spirits. I'm haunted by a spectre, which your mere presence hath power to charm away. And you must own that these are not precisely times for jesting. You might almost as well say that I have ceased to love books, because I've not brought my library into camp with me. You must make some allowance for me——" Here Jasper looked quite himself again, and his eyes brightened with affectionate pride as they rested on his brother's face. "You come here, flushed with victory and covered with glory, and wonder that we poor fellows, who are only covered with wounds and frost-bites, are not in such high feather as yourself——"

"How I wish we had had you with us!" cried Noel. "You should have seen some fighting——"

"I have enjoyed that privilege to a greater extent than you seem to be aware of," returned Jasper drily, smiling a little at his brother's ardour. "I have been in more battles than you, my dear boy—I was counting 'em up t'other day. And if you have carried off the greater share of the glory, you must at least admit I have the advantage of you in honourable scars."

"Now you speak more like yourself!" cried Noel. "But I trust, dear brother, I've never seemed to triumph unduly? We've been more fortunate of late in the north, but not more heroic. I'm not so childish, I hope, as to be dazzled by victory. And as for you—but you can never know, Jasper, the half of what I feel for you!"

Noel's voice faltered and the tears came into his eyes.

This display of affection touched Jasper's heart with inexpressible consolation, and with pain as inexpressible. "But the worst is over," he thought. "I can never again be in so cruel a strait as when I was in Boston. Dearest brother," he said aloud, taking Noel's hand, as he stood beside him, "you think too much of me. I'm not that paragon of wisdom you take me for. I was never so far gone as to imagine myself very much wiser than the rest of mankind, but I did, I own, somewhat plume myself on my resolution. Now, could I but resolve to think

no more of a certain thing which troubles me, 'twould vanish like the hollow phantom it is—but for the life of me I can't ! I will try, though,—'tis possible that pain and weakness have enfeebled my will for a time. Trust me, I'll lay the ghost yet !”

Jasper was very pale, but he spoke cheerfully—and presently changed the conversation to the business he had come upon. But long after he had gone, Noel was haunted by a look he had seen in his brother's face ; it had puzzled him—it was so full of affection, yet mingled with something else which he could not read.

“ 'Twas as though I had grieved him,” he thought. “ But that's impossible—I love him too much, and he knows it. He owned it touched him very nearly—when he said that, I think he was near betraying himself. Can he be in love with Mary, and she have refused him ? He was mightily put out, when I said she had observed the change in him. Or hath he, perhaps, some unhappy passion for a married woman—inno-cent, of course, but that hath destroyed his peace of mind ? But no ! Jasper is incapable of a lawless love ; if he loved, 'twould be in the high road of honour, I'll stake my life on that ! And I've never seen any sign in him, that any one woman was more to him than another. Whatever he may say, I believe he had better have made a clean breast of it to me !”

Whether Jasper succeeded in laying the ghost, or for whatever reason, he appeared much more cheerful after this conversation, and Noel was confirmed in his belief in the comfort which is to be found in the speaking of one's griefs—even this bare admission of a secret trouble having evidently eased Jasper's mind.

When, however, in May (a little after the rejoicings on account of the French treaties), His Excellency made choice of Jasper to go to Philadelphia about the Convention troops, Noel came as near as he ever had done in his life to thinking his brother could be unreasonably prejudiced.

Noel had learned from Captain Graydon of the “ Greens” (who had it from some of his people), that Miss Digby was undoubtedly in Philadelphia. Jasper was to set out early on Monday evening. General Washington knew by his spies that this was the very day fixed for the Festival in honour of Sir William Howe, but there were reasons for not delaying for even another day. On Sunday afternoon, Noel presented himself at his brother's quarters, and, having previously ascertained from

Telemachus that his master was alone, walked in, unannounced, to the humble room, which the officers of Jasper's regiment thought themselves very lucky to share.

Jasper was diligently studying a map spread out on the deal table which occupied the centre of the room, and now and then making a note in his pocket-book, of some by-road or cross-cut.

"I was coming down presently," he said, as Noel entered. "Can you make out that road by Hallibut's? the map is blotted just there."

Noel looked at the spot to which Jasper was pointing, and proposed to try and gently scratch off some of the ink, in the hope of tracing the road. While he was engaged in this, and Jasper was looking over his notes, Noel said, with an unsuccessful effort to conceal how much it cost him to speak,—

"I—I came up hoping to catch you alone. I—I want you to take a message for me to Miss Digby."

Now although Miss Digby's name had been but seldom mentioned between them, owing to the curious dislike which Jasper evidently had to discuss the subject, he was aware that she was in Philadelphia—Noel having been repeated to him what Graydon had said—and he might have been prepared for what was coming—perhaps he was, for he only kept his eyes bent upon his notes, and said, "Well?"

"You know, brother, what I feel for her," continued Noel, in his agitation poking his penknife clean through His Excellency's map.

"For God's sake, take care what you're doing!" cried Jasper sharply. "Give me the penknife—I'll be bound to be less clumsy than you seem to be to-day!"

Noel was so astonished at this extraordinary snappishness on Jasper's part, that he meekly surrendered his penknife, and watched his brother patiently scraping away, until he could make out the blotted road sufficiently for his purpose. If Jasper wished to prove to himself that his hand was steady, he succeeded.

"I shall only make another hole if I do any more," he observed in his usual tone, as he shut up the knife and returned it to his brother. "I must tell His Excellency 'twas my own awkwardness made that one. Yes, 'tis as I thought—the road turns off at the second wood. Well, what is the message that I am to take?"

"I know not what to send; there's a thousand things I

could say——” began Noel, his embarrassment vanished, now that he had broken the ice.

“I can scarce remember so many, even if I could be sure of the time to repeat them,” said Jasper lightly, and wondering if men felt like this on the rack.

“Well—say to her that I’ve thought of her so often, that if she has thought of me but half as much, I am content! And oh, Jasper, for God’s sake, find out if there’s any hope for me! I think if there was not, I could bear it like a man. Most likely, she’s engaged before now to marry some British officer or other, who’d make nothing of calling me a rebel to my face,” he added dismally; “and I think if I knew it, I could reconcile myself—no, not that! but I think I could bear it more easily than I can this suspense. So, dear Jasper, try to sound her. Oh, what a pity ’twas you did not understand her better, so as she might be more likely to open her mind to you—that is, if a woman ever does open her mind. You never saw her as she was in England, Jasper—she was all kindness, all good-nature—with just a dash of pride, to keep one on one’s best behaviour with her. I think, if you’d seen her then, you’d almost have loved her yourself.”

Jasper did not answer. He had turned his back upon his brother, and was apparently arranging two or three books which lay in the window-sill.

“I’ll do my best,” he said presently, speaking very abruptly; “but I ought to tell you that I do not like the task. A man should plead his own cause. She may resent my interference——”

“Not if you tell her ’tis a matter of life and death to me to know the truth!” cried Noel. “If you did but know how to appeal to it, there’s a womanly heart beneath all her pride, that will make her listen kindly, whatever her answer may be. Mary believes she has an inclination for some one—it must be some one she knew in England, for Mary’s opinion is built on some words she once let fall at Oglethorpe. I can tell you, brother, Mary thinks as highly of Miss Digby as I do myself. You can’t think the load ’tis off my heart, that you’ve undertook the errand for me!”

Having thus tortured Jasper to the extreme verge of his endurance, Noel saw him depart next afternoon, and, an hour or two afterwards, was himself hastily summoned to headquarters, and ordered to go at once to New Haven—where General Arnold

had been since the first of the month—and take orders from that General for the raising of levies in Connecticut.

Before he went, Noel confided to Mary that Jasper had promised to see Althea, and endeavour to sound her.

"'Tis more than I could ever do," he said. "One way or another, she never would let me come to the point with her. Well, if she prefers some pink-faced British Major or Colonel to me, I'd sooner know it. I've fancied sometimes, Mary, you knew more than you would own——"

"I know nothing! nothing!" cried Mary, with flaming cheeks. "If ever I had a suspicion, 'twas but the merest fancy—quite dispelled afterwards. You are too quick, Noel. I can truly say I'm as much in the dark as to her real inclinations, as you are yourself. I wish 'twas ended, I'm sure, one way or another!"

Mary uttered this wish rather peevishly; and Noel had the grace to feel ashamed of himself, as he remembered how unconscionably he had availed himself of her sympathetic ear, and how terribly he would miss her away in Connecticut.

It thus came to pass that about the time that Captain Montresor was displaying his figure of Fame, Noel, tossing on an uneasy bed in a wayside inn, was trying to imagine how Jasper would deliver his message, and how Althea would receive it. He had conjured up a dozen different scenes, before Jasper and Althea went out together in the summer-night into the garden at Walnut-Grove.

CHAPTER XIV.

HALLIBUT'S.

AFTER Fred had left him, Jasper's spirits underwent a great revulsion. What, he asked himself, should he say to his brother? He could but protest his innocence; and what if Noel should refuse to believe him?

As he thought of it, it almost seemed to Jasper that he was a villain, who had supplanted his own brother.

"Yet, my God! what else could I have done?" he said to himself, appealing from his own morbid self-reproaches. "I pleaded his cause sincerely, God knows! If I could have secured his happiness at the price of my own, I would have done it. But how shall I face him? How shall I begin to tell him?"

As Jasper rode along, sunk in these dark thoughts, his heart grew heavier and heavier, until Telemachus, a little way behind, noticed his dejected attitude, and sagaciously put it down to melancholy at parting with Miss Digby.

But this mood was only the first shrinking of a just and affectionate soul from a happiness which seemed to be obtained at the expense of another. Jasper's understanding of duty was too manly for him not to perceive that he had no right to reject Althea's love, because his brother had loved her too. He had not sought that love—he had almost sought her hatred, so fearful had he been of wronging his brother.

"'Tis a problem almost too hard for me to solve," he thought; "my stake in it is too great. I dare not trust my own judgment where I am to gain so much by it. It must be left to time—perhaps to death, which may come now that I have ceased to desire it."

Having ingeniously tortured himself with these considerations, Jasper began to wonder what Althea had written to Noel, and whether she had vouchsafed a word to himself. There was something in the packet—he had felt it as he took it from Althea's hand. They were riding along a level piece of road, with a thick undergrowth on either side, beyond which were woods quite shutting out the view. Jasper hung the reins over the holster of his saddle, and took Althea's letter from his breast. As she had said, it was not sealed, but it was so securely tied up, that he reluctantly put it away again until he could open it more conveniently—and, glancing back to see how far Telemachus was behind, desired him to come on faster.

"Where are my spurs?" he asked, observing that he was without them.

"Sho you not want no spurs, Mas'r Jasper—dat ar hoss he go quite quick 'nuff, any time. I take dem off, 'cos you so careless," said Telemachus, jogging up alongside. Ever since his master had lost his arm, Telemachus had constituted himself his guardian to an extent which sometimes tried sorely Jasper's patience.

"Put them on at once," he said, in the tone which Telemachus always obeyed. "At this pace we shall not reach camp to-night; and I mean to take an early supper at Hallibut's, and go on in the cool of the evening."

And in spite of Telemachus's highly-coloured picture of what would happen, if "dat ar cantank'rous bison" (as he designated

Jasper's powerful but perfectly good-tempered chestnut) once got the bit between his teeth, he was compelled to produce the spurs from his coat-tail pocket—which might almost have been Fortunatus's purse, from the astonishing number and variety of the objects stowed away in it.

"Dar, Mas'r Jasper, I on'y hope you not 'pent," observed Telemachus, as he remounted. "Supper, indeed!" he muttered to his horse, the first time he found himself far enough behind his master to indulge in soliloquy—"Dis nigger know better'n dat. Time to read dat ar letter—dat what *he* mean by supper. Tink I not know he roamin' 'bout de garding las' night, wid Miss Althea, jes' 's hard's ever dey could go, for hours an' hours? Pretty sort o' supper dere is to Hallibut's!"

With a snort of unutterable scorn, Telemachus urged his own nag after his master, who was riding towards the refreshment in question at a sharp trot, which Telemachus considered much too fast for bodily comfort.

"Hallibut's" stood in the midst of a desolate tract of country—desolate, that is, as regarded human habitation—but so shut in on all sides by wood, that it might have been the very ugly nest of some bird which builds on the ground. A board nailed to a tree, some hundred yards down the road, announced, in letters which rose one above another like children on a Jacobean monument, that entertainment was to be found here. One or two young men were lounging about the door. They eyed Colonel Fleming and his attendant in an ominously professional manner, which suggested the uncharitable idea that these half-military, half-pastoral youths might occasionally vary the monotony of agricultural life with a little highwaying. They presently, however, evinced so lively an interest in the patriotic cause, that it might reasonably be hoped they confined their operations to the enemies of their country.

The landlord was an old man, with a quick, nervous manner. He was much bowed with age, and had a habit of turning his back on the person he was addressing. Standing thus, resting the palms of his hands upon his knees, and looking over his shoulder, he always appeared to be in the very act of leaving his auditor; and if rumour spoke truly as to his antecedents, he had doubtless often found it convenient to assume an attitude so unfavourable to prolonged conversation. His maxim evidently was to ask as many and answer as few questions as possible. A note of interrogation put him to flight, and he did not like

people with too good memories. It was said that many a bale of tobacco and keg of brandy had been smuggled up and down the Delaware, under the paternal care of Old Hallibut; and there were some darker stories of missing pedlars and traders—which, however, happened so long ago, that no one in the neighbourhood could ever be got to acknowledge there was any truth in them.

"Yes; I reckon you can, Colonel," said this dubious host, in answer to Jasper's question whether he could have supper immediately? He shuffled off as he spoke, towards the door of the sanded parlour—in which Jasper had discovered him reconnoitring through the window—but stopped at the threshold, and, taking up his favourite position, looked back at his guest, and asked what his uniform might be?

"I am a Colonel of Artillery," replied Jasper briefly. Old Hallibut made as though this information were a morsel of food to be chewed before swallowing.

"Think there'll be some more fightin' pretty soon down this way?" he asked—apparently when he had disposed of the first answer.

"It's impossible to say—the British won't stop in Philadelphia for ever—and I daresay we shall fire a shot or two at them when they come out," replied Jasper.

Old Hallibut nodded his gray unkempt head. "We know the most o' what goes on," he said mysteriously, turning a little more towards his guest, and removing his right hand from his knee, to rapidly jerk the thumb in the supposed direction of Philadelphia. "There's been a kind o' rejoicin', aint there, down to Philadelph'y? or leastways there is to be, along o' bid-din' good-bye to Gin'ral Howe?"

"Something of the sort," said Jasper.

Old Hallibut's curiosity was so great, that he fairly turned round, and stared at Jasper from head to foot. "Was you there?" he asked.

"I saw something of it."

"But y'aint a Britisher?"

"His Excellency sent me with a message to the British Generals," said Jasper, perceiving that the only way to get rid of the old man was to answer his questions.

"That's so?" said Old Hallibut in a slow meditative tone. "Wa-al, I s'pose it's all right." This remark appeared to refer to the mystery of an American officer's presence at a British

revel. Jasper took his letters from his breast, as a hint that he was occupied.

"Much off the common for grandeur, think?" asked Old Hallibut.

"It was magnificent in its way—sham fights, dancing, fireworks, and all that," answered Jasper, who had drawn a chair to the table, which Old Hallibut calmly watched him do, without offering to assist him, as he observed with irritating deliberation,—

"Fine-dressed ladies, now, I'll swear, in plenty?"

"A good many—and gentlemen too," said Jasper.

"Warn't nothin' as happened to spile their sport, was there now?" inquired Old Hallibut mysteriously.

"I believe an attack was expected early in the night," said Jasper, somewhat surprised at this question, and all his suspicions quickened by it. "I heard this morning that something occurred at one of the outposts, but I believe it was a false alarm; nothing came of it at any rate."

"Ah!" drawled Old Hallibut; "but suth'n *might* ha' come of it and *would* ha' come of it, if some folk could ha' had their way. Seen a good deal o' sarvice?" he asked, with a jerk of his chin towards the Colonel's maimed left arm.

"Pretty well," replied Jasper; and lest his host should require of him a detailed account of his campaigns and wounds, he added in a tone intended to check further conversation,—*"I am much pressed for time, and shall be glad to have something to eat as soon as possible. I have a long way to ride to-night, and I shall be obliged if you will send my servant with some ink, and a pen, and some writing-paper."*

"I'll go fetch it myself," said the old man, shuffling off with so obvious an intention of returning, that Jasper added hastily,—

"Don't trouble to do that—I wish to speak to my man."

Telemachus made his appearance in a few minutes, armed with a very dirty sheet of paper, two pens worn almost to the pith, and a battered leaden inkstand—which looked as though it had been used on some sudden emergency as a cannon-ball.

"'Pears like Ole Man Hallibut aint no great describer," observed Telemachus, presenting these weapons to his master—he had a huge admiration for Jasper's penmanship, and a corresponding contempt for persons who could not write. "He aint got no more paper, not a mossul—and dese yer pens has bin

used to ile de locks an' keys with. Seems to me as white folks ought'er be ashamed of theirselves, if *dey* can't write," he continued, dusting the inkstand with his fingers; "'taint no matter for a nigger—'taint 'spected of 'em; but ig'rance is right down disgustin' in white folks. But how you goin' to write wid dese yer, Mas'r Jasper, 's more'n I know."

"They will serve for all the writing I shall do," said Jasper. "Be careful how you talk here, Telemachus; say as little as you can about the camp. You may chatter as much as you choose about Philadelphia and the Mischianza."

Jasper might possibly not have given this permission if he had been aware of what Telemachus could say about himself. He answered glibly,—“Yes, Mas'r Jasper. Low sort o' folks here, Mas'r Jasper, mighty low. Ole Man Hallibut he dreffle blackguard; Jack-o'-bofe-sides, dey *do* say."

"Hush! you may be overheard," said Jasper.

"Yes, Mas'r Jasper—dis jus' de berry morrul place for ears ob' walls," observed Telemachus—who thus rendered the proverb which teaches us that walls have ears.

"Fetch me the holster-pistols," continued Jasper; "and then don't let me be disturbed till supper is ready."

"Bress you, Mas'r Jasper, der aint no supper in dis yer ninn," said Telemachus earnestly; "bacon an' eggs is de mos' Ole Man Hallibut can do—an' mighty lucky ef you git any eggs. Der's a gal jus' gone out, fer to hunt around in de bushes an' see fer to find some."

"You had better go and help her," returned Jasper drily, as Telemachus showed no disposition to depart; "but first fetch me the pistols—and mind how you carry them."

Telemachus brought them with great circumspection. Jasper looked carefully to see that they had not been tampered with, and once more desired Telemachus to leave him, and to be very cautious in his talk.

The packet contained two letters, and something wrapped up in several papers, which proved to be an old-fashioned ring which Jasper had often seen Althea wear. It was a large crystal, set with brilliants, and the letters A D done in hair under the crystal. Round the broad shank of the ring was the posy—

This and the Giver Are thine for ever.

He slipped it on his finger before he opened the letters. One of them was addressed to Noel, and the other to Mary. He

read that to Mary first. It contained an account of how they had passed the winter in Philadelphia, and gave some details of the *Mischianza*.

"I took no part in it myself, tho' invited to be one of the ladies," she said. "I have been—never mind why—or ask Col. Fleming if you feel enough curiosity—so dull in my spirits that I have had no inclination for merry-making. Indeed, our revels seemed to me to be no better than a kind of fiddling while Rome was burning."

This was all she said about herself. Jasper refolded the letter, and paused a moment, before he opened the one addressed to Noel. It was not so fairly written as that to Mary, and there were one or two corrections in it. Jasper's eyes were dim before he had read it through.

"MY DEAR KIND BROTHER NOEL," wrote Althea, "You know I always call'd you so, and always said there could be no other relationship between us. Jasper's love to you is so great, that he would never have let me know I had his affections, but that, in the surprise and grief of learning how much he had suffer'd, I betray'd myself. What he is, you know as well as I, and I saw it from the first day I knew him, tho' I show'd I did so chiefly by my unkindness to him. I have us'd him very ill, but have, I truly believe, never given you a just cause to say I've wronged you. Let me know you forgive me, for, however against my will or seeking, giving you any uneasiness. I shall not be happy till I know you are so, and that you believe me, as I trust I've always been, your sincere friend and well-wisher, ALTHEA DIGBY."

In the midst of thinking how it would be when he gave this letter to Noel, Jasper reopened it, to see how his own name looked in Althea's handwriting. She had begun to write "your Brother's," but had carefully crossed out the words, and had written "Jasper's."

Jasper was somewhat disappointed to find that she had written nothing to himself—a reflection which was both ungrateful and unreasonable, as she could not possibly have had anything to say which she had not said already. To be sure, there was the outside wrapper of the packet, with his name upon it—"Col. Fleming"—rather unsteadily written, as though the writer's hand had trembled; and beneath the address of Mary's letter were the words,—“Kindly fav'd by Col. Fleming;” but this was all.

Jasper was considering the less agreeable subject of what he should say to Noel, and whether he should write at all, or wait and trust to speech, when he heard a sound of voices outside the window—or rather, as it seemed, round the corner of the house. It was now past seven o'clock, and, the house being

somewhat overshadowed by trees, the light was already beginning to wane.

The first words which caught his ear instantly aroused his attention.

"He'll have a better dinner to-morrow in Philadelph'y, nor what he'll have a supper to-night on Barren Hill," said a voice which sounded like a young man's. "They'll be up with him afore daybreak."

"Think so?" asked another voice. "Think they'll hang him, when they've got him?"

"No, you born fool, you; they won't hang a French Markis," returned the first voice.

Just then, Jasper heard a heavy step and a whisper, and believed that Old Hallibut had gone out to warn them to be quiet—for the talking ceased, and the men moved off. A minute or two after, the door was opened very softly, and Old Hallibut thrust his head in. Seeing his guest busy writing, he observed that supper would be ready in a quarter of an hour, and vanished—but left the door ajar, and was evidently on the watch.

Jasper knew that the Marquess La Fayette was to occupy Barren Hill in a day or two, with the view of being ready to harass the expected British retreat. It was easy to suppose that he had done this a little earlier than had been at first intended, and it was evident that the movement had got wind—while the tone of the speakers sufficiently showed both that the Marquess was in danger, and that he would not hear of his danger from them.

Jasper congratulated himself on having so promptly sent for his pistols. His plan was made in a moment. Fortunately, he had well studied that ill-used map, through which Noel had put his penknife—only the day before yesterday. He must get away without exciting suspicion, and then strike across country, and at all risks, cross the Schuylkill, and warn La Fayette that he was to be attacked. There was just time to write a few words to Noel, which he resolved to entrust to Telemachus, together with a note to General Washington. He should thus take the double chance, and, even if he himself failed to reach Barren Hill, La Fayette might be succoured from the camp.

Old Hallibut's paper served for the note to His Excellency—the letter to Noel was written on the sheet in which Althea had wrapped up her ring. There was no time to pick and choose phrases, and Jasper's letter was soon written. He had

scarcely finished and sealed it (which he did with a dirty wafer he found in the table-drawer), when supper was brought in. It consisted, as Telemachus had predicted, of a dish of bacon garnished with eggs, set upon a coarse and not over-clean cloth. The Colonel was assiduously waited upon by the host himself, in spite of a broad hint that his servant could do it very well. The pistols in particular seemed to have a fascination for Old Hallibut—he hovered about them as they lay on the mantel-shelf, until Jasper took the opportunity of his host's momentary absence to place them on the table close beside him.

The moment he had finished supper, which he despatched as speedily as he thought was prudent, Jasper ordered Telemachus to get his, and went out himself to see that the horses had been properly attended to. Remarking that they had come a long way, he ordered an extra feed of corn, and stood by while Old Hallibut held the sieve under their noses. Jasper's horse was fidgety—he pawed constantly with one hoof, and when his master caressed him, he whined uneasily.

"I'll see to feeding them, if you'll go and hurry up my fellow—'tis high time we were off," said Jasper, taking the sieve.

The decisive tone and action had their effect. With a questioning glance at the Colonel, old Hallibut shambled off, and Jasper instantly set the sieve on the ground and lifted up the suspected hoof; it was as he suspected—a sharp stone had been so cunningly inserted, that the poor beast would have infallibly fallen lame before he had gone a quarter of a mile. Jasper had but just ascertained that the other horse was all right, when Telemachus came into the rude shed which served as a stable.

"Hector has been meddled with," said Jasper. "Get that stone out carefully, while I pay the reckoning, and don't leave the horses an instant till I come back."

He had taken the precaution to slip the pistols into his breast, before he left the parlour, and he now stood and called for the reckoning at the inn-door. There was no one about—even the girl of whom Telemachus had spoken had disappeared. Old Hallibut evidently wished to find some pretext for delay, and as evidently was disconcerted by the prompt action of his guest. The horses had been brought out, and Jasper had just mounted, when he heard the click of a casement, and, looking up, saw a sunburnt girl, with hair bleached nearly white by

the sun, looking out from the upper window. She laid her finger on her lips, shook her head vigorously, and pointed in the direction in which the horses' heads were turned. Old Hallibut seemed to have heard the window open, for he ran a step or two out into the road—more nimbly than his wizened legs and shambling gait promised—and glanced up. But the girl had drawn the window to, and disappeared.

"We are well out of that place, Telemachus," said Jasper, when a turn hid from them the bare shed-like inn, and the scarecrow figure of Old Hallibut, still gazing after them from the middle of the road. "The men we saw when we came are thieves of some sort—and, I fancy, are not very particular of what sort. Luckily, I know several short cuts through the wood; but we must press on as fast as we can."

"Dear Lord A'mighty! Mas'r Jasper!" stuttered Telemachus, who was the colour of wood-ashes. "You not mean you tink we been gone fell 'mong cow-boys?"

"Cow-boys or skimmers, it is no great matter which," returned his master; "they are horse-stealers and cattle-stealers—if they are not worse—and they know of an attack that is to be made to-night or to-morrow morning on the Marquess. Listen to what I am going to say. At the cross-roads we must part company, and you must ride as hard as you can to Valley Forge, and give this note, the instant you arrive, into His Excellency's own hand. You can tell him, if he asks you any questions, that I overheard a conversation, and that I am gone to Barren Hill, to put the Marquess on his guard."

Having at great pains impressed all this upon Telemachus, and especially the necessity of haste, Colonel Fleming took the cross-road, and was so fortunate as to ford the Schuykil unobserved. He made such haste, that he would have been in time, even if the surprise-party had not lost its way, and been so long in arriving, that every one had begun to think the alarm had been false.

CHAPTER XV.

ALTHEA ASTONISHES CAPTAIN DIGBY.

A DAY or two after the mysterious failure of General Grant's attempt to surprise the Marquess La Fayette, Althea, finding herself alone with her brother, informed him that there was

something which she would be glad to tell him, if he would promise to keep the secret. To this Fred replied that horses should not draw it from him, and instantly demanded what it was about?

Althea did not immediately answer—and when she did speak, it was only to observe that she should not so much mind Cousin Maverick's knowing it, if she could trust her not to tell everybody, but that she did not care to be the talk of Philadelphia. Here she broke off abruptly, and, getting up from her chair, went to a little round mirror which hung at the other end of the room, and appeared to be arranging some of her curls.

"What's it about, Ally?" asked Fred, taking his cane (which had a Moor's head for a handle) from the corner close beside him, and fidgeting with it to conceal a great deal of impatience, and a little uneasiness. Who could say what Fleming might have told Ally about Mary?

"Well, *who's* it about, then?" he said, as she did not at once reply. "I swear I won't split." He was feeling rather qualmish—as one does in a high swing when the swing returns.

"It is about—Colonel Fleming—partly," said Althea, who, having arranged her head-dress to her satisfaction, was now standing before the fireplace—her left hand resting on the high mantelshelf, and her right playing nervously with the pin-cushion and scissors which hung on red ribbons from her waist.

"Colonel Fleming!" exclaimed Fred, evidently much disconcerted. "Well—go on!" Here he thrust the Moor's head into his mouth, and became very red in the face before he could get it out again. "For God's sake, Ally, don't stand there, humming and hawing! Cousin Maverick will be coming back soon, and then you can't tell me, you say."

But Althea was doing something to her waistband, and seemed not to hear. Having settled that matter, she reverted to the mantelpiece, at which she stared intently.

"Come to the point, for Heaven's sake, Ally!" cried the unhappy Fred. "I'm particular interested, now I know it's about Fleming."

"But it is about some one else too."

"O Lord! I thought so! Now for it!" thought Fred, gnawing despairingly at the Moor.

"You said the other night that I used to dislike him," continued Althea—addressing the mantelpiece, and leaning her forehead on her crossed hands, so that her face could not be seen—

"and you seemed to fear I might be wanting in—in—the respect he is entitled to." Althea hummed and hawed a good deal before she got this out, but then continued much more briskly,—"You think you can read women, my dear boy, but you never guessed *my* riddle." She laughed rather nervously as she spoke.

"What, is *that* it?" exclaimed Fred, his countenance suddenly brightening. "Why, my dear girl, I knew all about that before we went to Oglethorpe!"

"Indeed! then you knew it before I knew it myself," said Althea, with a toss of her head.

"That's very likely—lookers-on see most of the game," observed Fred sententiously. "When you used to say Noel was like another brother, I knew very well what it would come to. And of course that explained your dislike to Fleming. As Cousin Maverick said, 'twas not to be expected as there could be any love lost between you, when, but for his persuasions, Noel might never have joined the rebels."

Althea's sense of the ludicrous was so tickled by this, that she laughed immoderately, and could not speak for some minutes—but it was a laugh that came very near to end in crying.

Presently, however, she seemed to make a great effort to throw off her embarrassment. She sat down in Mrs. Maverick's arm-chair, and, looking straight before her, said quietly,—“I see that what I have to say will be a great surprise to you. I have promised Colonel Fleming that I will marry him as soon as the war is over.”

Fred's astonishment was so overwhelming, that for several minutes it prevented his grasping her meaning.

"Colonel Fleming!" he exclaimed, as soon as his bewildered tongue could get hold of an articulate syllable. "COLONEL FLEMING! Good Heavens, Ally! I can't take it in—would you mind saying it again?"

"Remember—you have given me your word of honour to tell no one, till I give you leave. Not that I am ashamed," said Althea, holding her head very high; "but that I hate to be made a wonder of, and I know they all think 'tis Noel—thanks to Cousin Maverick's talking so about him."

Here she crossed her arms behind her head, leaned back in her chair, and looked defiantly at Fred.

"I swear I'll not utter a word!" said Fred, as earnestly as was possible to a mind still so taken up with this astonishing news, as to leave very little room for any other idea.

"Do you *really* mean to say, Ally," he asked, after a long silence, during which he had been thoughtfully gnawing the Moor's right ear, "that you are going to *marry* him?"

"Not till the war is over, of course."

"Oh, that can't be far off, with all this humble-pie we're going to eat, you know," said Fred in a tone of inward conviction, not shared by his sister—who remembered certain words of Colonel Fleming's about Independence being now the only thing possible.

"Do you really mean to marry Fleming, Ally?" he repeated, as Althea, lost in reverie, did not immediately reply.

"I shall marry Colonel Fleming, if I ever marry anybody; but I'm afraid the war will last longer than you fancy."

Fred began to whistle softly to himself. "I beg your pardon, Ally," he said, hastily checking himself. "I'm sure I've no particular objection," he continued, after a pause. "He happens to be on the wrong side, it's true—but we must have peace some day or other. But what beats me so uncommon is that I always thought it was Noel." Here perplexity set in again so strong, that Fred's eyes assumed an expression of bewilderment truly piteous in so well-grown a young man. "*Warn't* Noel in love with you?" he asked, in a sudden spasm of alarm. Having been so egregiously mistaken in one of his facts, Fred justly reflected that he might also have been wrong in another.

"I suppose he was," said Althea, shifting in her chair; "but then you see *I* never was in love with *him*."

"But I thought you couldn't *abide* Fleming," observed Fred. "Was all that put on?"

"I didn't know I liked him then—and he provoked me," replied Althea, turning very red. "Don't stare at me so, Fred; you've a dreadful habit of staring one out of countenance!"

"I'm sure I beg your pardon, Ally," said Fred, obediently wheeling his eyes away to a picture on the wall—apparently the portrait of an effigy, to judge by the wooden expression of its features. "I'm sure I always thought you was very unkind to him, and Cousin Maverick thought so too. Don't you think that perhaps you was in love with him all the time, and didn't know it, and that was why you disliked him so much?" he continued in a reflective tone. "I've heard of such things——"

"At any rate, I don't dislike him now," observed Althea

parenthetically ; " you may make yourself perfectly easy on that score."

" Oh, I do, I do!" cried Fred, wheeling round again upon his sister. " I assure you, Ally, I always thought you'd know your own mind, when you'd once made it up. I don't see why you should dislike him, I'm sure. I never could make it out. Depend upon it, you was in love with him all the time. The only wonder is that with your penetration you didn't find it out before now."

The first surprise being over, Fred's mind was able to entertain the consideration that Providence, in thus ordaining that Jasper should marry Althea, was kindly removing an obstacle out of his own path.

" I don't know why you shouldn't have him, if you want to ; he's as plucky a fellow as you could wish to see," he observed, thoughtfully sucking his cane. " I saw him at Bunker's Hill, and I never saw a fellow more cool. He told me afterwards that he felt mightily inclined to run away at first, but I think he meant it for a joke. I'm sure no one would ever have thought he meant to run away to look at him any more than I did myself."

" It takes a great deal of imagination to be a coward, my dear brother ; you have not imagination enough to run away with you," said Althea.

" That's the first joke you've made, Ally—why, I really don't remember when you made one before—not since we occupied Philadelphia, though you used to be always making 'em. It quite puts one in spirits," cried Fred heartily. " If you think, though, that I didn't feel beastly, when I was crawling through the bushes on my way from Saratoga, I'd have you to know my hair stood bolt up on end a dozen times at least."

Althea went across the room to her brother and kissed him—a favour which Fred received with the equable satisfaction of a Newfoundland when his head is patted. " I assure you, I believe it, for so did mine on the mere hearing of it," she said. He pulled her on to his knee, but chewed his cane for some time before he said, his eyes still fixed on vacancy,—“ I'm sure, sister, I beg your pardon for having said you was unfeeling. I thought at the time as you took what I said uncommon well ; of course I know a woman can't always express her feelings. I wondered you wasn't more angry with me."

" I loved you for saying it," said Althea very sweetly.

"Of course," continued Fred, after a pause (during which he had again diligently consulted the Moor); "of course, 'tis a cursed pity he should be a rebel. To tell you the truth, though, Ally, I've rather changed my opinion about rebels. 'Tis our duty to fight 'em, of course, as long as the war lasts—and I think these concessions are positively shameful—but I see no reason why we should bear 'em any ill will after they've submitted; and so as our honour might be saved, I shouldn't care, for my part, if peace was to be signed to-morrow!"

CHAPTER XVI.

CAPTAIN ANDRÉ PROPOSES A SURE METHOD WITH THE REBELS.

It was known that a French fleet was already on its way to the assistance of the revolted Colonies, and its arrival would render Philadelphia untenable. Many of the loyal residents had made preparations for leaving with the British army; and Mrs. Maverick took counsel on the matter with Mr. Galloway, the ex-Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Assembly, and who was himself particularly odious to the popular party, for having acted as guide to Sir William on his march. Mr. Galloway rather advised her to remain. It was, he said, very unlikely that Philadelphia would again be occupied; while New York was sure to be constantly exposed to attack. No one would be molested, he added, who had not been actively employed on the royal side; indeed, Sir Henry Clinton had actually advised the magistrates and others who had acted for the British authorities to try and make their peace with Congress!

"I protest, 'tis enough to make one turn rebel!" exclaimed the indignant old lady, when she heard this. "Mr. Justice Jones may well say His Majesty is betrayed, when one of his Generals deliberately washes his hands of those who have served him faithfully, and tells 'em to do the best they can to get the rebels to pardon 'em for it!"

Mrs. Maverick had written to Mr. Gosforth, to ask his advice, but had had no answer; indeed, she had not heard from him, since he sent her the false report of Colonel Fleming's death.

"I know not what to do," she said to Althea. "If I return to Boston, I must reconcile myself to see changes that

will go near to break my heart; and if we stay here, this city will be the very hotbed of rebellion—for all that was said of its being so well affected! Fred must return to New York, and that ought to decide us to go there. 'Tis a dreadful thing at my age to be drove about from pillar to post; but when one has once been uprooted, 'tis easier, to be sure. And now to think that the French are coming to take part with the rebels! We live in dreadful times! I remember when I was a girl, there was an old minister preached about the end of the world; he said it was to come about the end of the century—and I'm sure I can quite believe it, if things are to go on at this rate!"

Althea did not reply. She had grown strangely silent of late, and had been restless and irritable.

"I really think, child, that seeing Mr. Fleming has put you in a bad humour," exclaimed Mrs. Maverick one day, when Althea had said snappishly that she was sick of hearing the army was to march, and that she would not pack her trunks until 'twas certain. "I protest, there's no pleasing you—you are in a dozen minds at once! I've not seen you so touchy this long while—not since Mr. Fleming was our prisoner in the siege. If the sight of one rebel can put you out so, I'm sure Boston is no place for us now, where they swarm like bees in a hive."

"Forgive me, dear cousin," said Althea, almost in tears. "I know not what has come over me. I am, indeed, as you say, in a dozen minds at once, and I sometimes wish——"

What Althea wished remained untold for that time; for the negro servant announced a visit from Captain André, who appeared carrying a beautiful bouquet in his hand, which he presented with the most charming grace in the world—saying as he did so, that he hoped the memory of its perfume might be permitted to mingle in the ladies' recollections of their last days in Philadelphia. "For we are to march for certain in a few days now," he added; "so few, that you may leave these roses, scarce faded, for the rebels to save you the trouble of throwing 'em away."

"Nay, indeed, Captain André," said Mrs. Maverick—who thought Althea might have said it herself—"they shall not be so served, I promise you! Sooner nor leave 'em for the rebels, I will press them in my *herbarium*, and carry 'em away with me."

Captain André protested this was too much honour; but

Mrs. Maverick made him ring for a bowl of water, and would have Althea arrange them then and there.

Meantime the Captain began to speak of affairs, and of the probability of the rebels attacking them on their march to New York.

"Not that they can do more than harass our rear," he said lightly. "But we hear the expected coming of the French fleet has put 'em in high feather, and that Lee swears he will make mince-meat of us."

The Captain went on to say that many of the Tories had resolved to remain, trusting not to be molested. "The Shippens will stay," he observed. "But, to be sure, fiends incarnate would respect the family of the lovely Miss Peggy." André said this, looking at Althea—but if he hoped to see a jealous flash in her eye he was disappointed; she only remarked that the Shippens were too closely connected with all the best families in Philadelphia, to have anything to fear.

"'Twould be terrible indeed to think of the lovely Peggy's father brought to the gallows!" cried André. "That is the punishment the rebels award to what they are pleased to call treason. They have just sufficient military spirit to know that to a man of honour, hanging is a thousand deaths in one."

"You can never be in any danger of it, Captain André," said Althea coldly.

"Thank God, no!" he returned. "But a monstrous odd thing happened to me once; 'twas just before I left England, and I was on a visit to my cousin Anna Seward. She had a gentleman there that I had never seen before; and no sooner does this gentleman see me, than he cries out to my cousin,— 'This is the same gentleman I saw in the dream I told you of!' And when I ask what he means, he tells me that a night or two before he had dreamed of seeing a vast concourse of people assembled about a gibbet, and a man brought out to be hanged—and this man, he declared, exactly resembled your humble servant. I protest my hand went up to my neck before I was aware," he said, laughing. "If I had been superstitiously inclined, I might have been made uneasy by his unlucky dream—but, as I told the gentleman, my features having nothing whatever remarkable about 'em, ten to one the likeness was a pure imagination. We are all the stuff that dreams are made of; but my cousin's friend might have dreamed a more civil dream, if he needs must trouble his head to dream

of me at all—and so I told him. Well, I wish I was as sure of one or two other things”—here he shot a sidelong glance at Althea—“as I am that I shall never come to be hanged!”

The Captain rattled on in this way—ostensibly addressing his conversation to Mrs. Maverick, but with every now and then a side-stroke for Althea. It was near sunset; and as Althea sat in the window, a rosy glow filled half the room, touching her hair, her cap, her neck, and the folds of her white dress, with a warm flush. The captain’s artistic eye took it all in very approvingly.

“Peggy is a lovely child, but Althea is a woman,” he thought, as he stole a glance at the proud grace of her pose, and the beautiful outlines of her cheek and neck. She was leaning her cheek upon her hand, and he could not see the expression of her face, but he fancied she impatiently tapped her foot when he began to talk about Colonel Fleming, and of the favourable impression he had made by his manly bearing in his interview with the Generals. He went on to lament that a different policy had not been adopted towards the malcontents, and more direct overtures made to the leaders.

“We should have made it their interest to accommodate matters,” he said. “The leading spirits here thought, with some reason, that their careers were intentionally sacrificed. There’s no doubt that if Colonel Washington’s services in poor Braddock’s expedition had been properly recognised, he would not now be the rebel Generalissimo. But he saw himself and his brother officers looked down upon, and passed over in favour of British officers of half their experience and claims, and became disgusted. And if Mr. Otis’s father had had the judgeship which was promised him, we should never have had those fire-brand speeches from the son, which set the Colonies in a blaze.”

“Ah, Captain André,” cried Mrs. Maverick, lifting up her plump mittened hands, “there you hit the nail on the head! I have always said ’twas folly to make enemies of the cleverest men in the Colonies, as we’ve done. And then to go and write such letters, and take so little care of ’em that they fell, Heaven knows how, into Dr. Franklin’s hands! Was ever such madness!”

“You may well call it madness, dear Madam,” returned André. “We began at the wrong end; we should have let men like Mr. Washington see that His Majesty’s service offered them a better chance than they can ever hope to make for themselves

by rebellion. Once assured of that, one half of 'em would come in, and t'other half would lose all credit. Colonel Fleming, for instance, is a man worth gaining. He should be sounded—Miss Digby, you should use your influence; I dare swear the Colonel would not take it amiss from *you*."

This was not the first time that Captain André had brought up Colonel Fleming's name, in a way plainly intended to let Althea know he suspected she had some particular interest in that quarter. She had hitherto affected to ignore these insinuations; but this time she turned upon her tormentor.

"I respect both myself and Colonel Fleming too much to attempt to cajole him into his duty," she said haughtily.

"She calls it 'duty,'" thought André; "then she is either not very far gone, or hath unconditionally surrendered. I did not say 'cajole,' Miss Digby," he said aloud. "You could sure make such a representation of the case, as would show the Colonel wherein his true interest lies?"

"Can you not conceive it possible, Captain André," said Althea, "that some at least of the rebels sincerely believe their cause is just, and would refuse with abhorrence all offers to betray it?" There was a faint touch of scorn in her voice as she spoke, but he chose to ignore it.

"Pshaw! my dearest Miss Althea, who talks of betraying?" he said lightly.

"What you say of *gaining*, and *sounding*, and *interest*, is vastly like betraying," she replied. "At least, 'twould be called so, were such overtures to be made by a French government to a British officer."

"That's in regular warfare—this is only rebellion," cried André. "Every word you say proves more clearly our madness in neglecting the leaders. Colonel Fleming is a man whose influence is more to be dreaded than that of a dozen mere orators. His stern unvarnished simplicity carries conviction with it—I protest I felt the spell myself. They say he was a lawyer before he was a soldier; and if to make the worse appear the better reason be the art of a lawyer, he possesses it in perfection. He might be one of Cromwell's Ironsides," continued André, in a more bantering tone, "who made war with the sword in one hand, and the Bible in the other—he hath lost the hand which should hold the Bible, but he threatened us more than once with the sword, t'other day. Have you ever read *Hudibras*, Miss Digby? You have, I'll be sworn—and remember

how the first canto opens. Is not Colonel Fleming hit off to the life?

‘Then did Sir Knight abandon dwelling,
And out he rode a-Colonelling.’

I protest I never think of him, but I imagine him singing the Hundredth Psalm through his nose, and leading his Roundheads to the sack of a cathedral!”

As André said this, he looked boldly at Althea, to mark the effect of his words. It was scarcely what he expected, though he had been prepared for her to show some resentment.

“If Colonel Fleming’s words carry any conviction with them,” she said in a voice which trembled with but half-suppressed anger, “’tis because he is, however mistaken, convinced himself of their truth. He was unhappily driven into rebellion by grievances which we all now acknowledge were real ones, and not because he had no hopes of advancement otherwise. He had, on the contrary, a very fair prospect before him, which he cast away from the most honourable motives. And he is as little capable of sacking a cathedral—or of any other act of wanton mischief—as he is of listening to such offers as you hint at—but which, I think, Captain André, you would scarce have the courage to propose to his face.”

Mrs. Maverick had made several attempts to check Althea, but could get no farther than, “My dear! my dear Althea!” Althea paid not the slightest heed to these feeble remonstrances, and would have fairly withered up the offender with her scorn but for an unfortunate anti-climax which spoilt her peroration. As ill luck would have it, the Captain’s nosegay had been set upon a small mahogany table with three legs, which stood in the middle of the bay-window, and Althea, in rising, overset it. The bowl fell into the Captain’s lap, and the water plentifully bedewed his silk stocking, while the table struck him a smart blow upon the knee. At this awkward juncture, the Captain had the best of it. Dissembling the anguish which the sharp edge of the table had caused his knee-cap, he was instantly on his knees picking up the table and the bowl—which, having broken its fall upon his person, had escaped uninjured—and collecting the scattered flowers; while Althea, much confused, rang the bell for the foot-page, and haughtily commanded him to fetch a cloth and wipe up the spilled water. By this time, Mrs. Maverick had recovered herself sufficiently to chide her cousin for her carelessness, and assure herself that the bowl was not cracked.

"I am very sorry," said Althea loftily—and then the absurdity of the situation struck her, and she burst out laughing. "'Twas a pure accident, Captain André," she said, still laughing, "and in proof of it, I will lend you my handkerchief to dry your stocking with."

Although Althea laughed, there was a something in her manner as she conferred this favour, which plainly said,—“Do not presume to take advantage of my clemency.” He understood it so.

"I am not worthy of such goodness," he said penitently, as he accepted the handkerchief, and wiped his dripping shoe-buckle. "Believe me, I was but jesting—Colonel Fleming is a man whose disinterestedness 'tis as impossible to doubt as his courage—and I should never have called it in question, even in jest, had I not been convinced he would forgive me, since it hath moved Miss Digby to defend him."

The growing twilight prevented Captain André from seeing the effect of this sly thrust; but Mrs. Maverick observed that she really believed Mr. Fleming set great store by Althea's opinion—though he'd never said so—and, to be sure, when he was their prisoner, Althea had a particular dislike to him.

"When we are all once more in New York, Miss Althea," says the Captain, as he takes his leave, "I shall use my best endeavours to obtain your dislike."

"What on earth did he mean by that, child?" asked Mrs. Maverick, when he had gone. "I know 'tis said love often begins with dislike, but no one could possibly dislike Captain André. I really think you ought to give him a little more encouragement. 'Tis all he's waiting for, as any one might see with half an eye. Though what possessed you to take Colonel Fleming's part in that furious way, all of a sudden, is more than I can imagine!"

CHAPTER XVII.

DR. YELDALL IS CALLED IN.

THE army was to move on the 18th of June. Every one's preparations were being made, and Althea had at last packed her gowns—telling herself, as she folded the one she had worn at the Mischianza, that her first duty was to her brother, and that all

other thoughts and hopes must be deferred until the peace. Peace! with the French fleet expected off the coasts every hour! Althea's heart sickened as she thought of it.

"If I had happened to like Jack André," she said to herself, "duty and love could have gone hand in hand, instead of love seeming almost a sin."

Althea was sitting amidst her half-packed portmanteaus, as she made these reflections. It was early in the evening, and the sun's rays seemed to have lost but little of their fierceness. She was hot and tired, and as she put away a little satin bag which she had begun to embroider as long ago as when she was at Bath, and had never finished, she asked herself whether she would not have done more wisely if she had accepted an offer—made to her as she was working on that very bag—to become attendant and companion-in-ordinary to a rich and peevish old relation of her father's. The ancient lady had never forgiven her for choosing rather to—as she spitefully expressed it—follow a marching regiment to the Plantations. Althea saw herself walking out with the pug, or carrying that poor angel when his asthma was more trying than usual, playing double dummy of week evenings, and reading Mrs. Rowe's *Dialogues of the Dead* on Sundays.

"On fine days, we should have taken the air in a close carriage," thought Althea; "and I should have been for ever letting down the window another inch, and then pulling it up again. We should have driven into Cirencester once a week, to match some worsteds, or to get a gargle made up for Cousin Theo's throat. I should have been scolded, if the greenhouse door was left open five minutes too long, or if the cook put too much cinnamon in the custard. Once or twice a week, the parson would drop in, and then we should play single dummy, and Cousin Theo would talk all the parish over. From one week's end to another, we should never have done anything worth doing, and yet we should have seemed never to have a moment's leisure. My life would have been spent in snipping off the dead leaves in the greenhouse, working at the tambour frame, and reading books to Cousin Theo, which she knows by heart, and always falls asleep over. Don't you think, Althea Digby, that even being in love with a Colonel in the rebel army is better than that?"

"I declare, child, you look like Marius among the ruins of Carthage!" says Mrs. Maverick, interrupting these flights of

imagination ; "I'm sure there's nothing so fatiguing as packing—I thought my knees would give way under me, just now. I must sit down."

"Then take my chair, cousin," cried Althea, jumping up, "for I must go on, or 'twill be dark before I am done."

"I daresay you feel it—'tis but natural you should," observed Mrs. Maverick, as she watched Althea deftly smoothing out the folds of the black and silver brocade. "'Tis a sad time for a young woman—just when you ought to be happiest, and to have nothing but pleasure to think about. I'm sure, if I'd known what was coming, I would have let you go to Mrs. Theodosia. Who knows ? she might have left you all her fortune."

"I could never have endured it," said Althea, on her knees at her trunk. "I was but just thinking, when you came in, that I would sooner have gone through much worse than have been a prisoner-at-large in Cousin Theo's house. I've ill repaid your goodness in saving me from that fate."

"My dear, I do not feel so sure I've done well by you," returned the old lady. "I hoped to have got you married before now—but what with the troubles, and your being hard to please—good gracious, Althea ! you don't mean to say you've tore that ruffle ? What a misfortune, to be sure ! I fear 'twill be impossible to mend it, so as for the darn not to show. What a pity !"

This was the ruffle which Colonel Fleming had thought was not much torn.

"I never saw such a rent in my life," continued the old lady, shaking her head, and clicking her tongue in fresh dismay, as she perceived the full extent of the mischief. "'Tis hanging in ribbons—positively in ribbons ! I suppose you caught it on a nail, for how else you could have done it I can't imagine ! real Mechlin too ! Did you know it when you had done it ?"

"Yes—no—that is, I did not think it was so bad. I mean, I meant to mend it," stammered Althea. "Let me put it away, cousin—it must wait now."

Mrs. Maverick looked at her inquiringly. "I sometimes fancy, Althea," she said rather tartly, "that you don't know what you *do* mean. Well, when I was younger, I was famous for my lace-mending, but I doubt if even I could set that ruffle on its legs again. You seem monstrous indifferent about it—'tis old, too—money can't buy such lace nowadays. How on earth did you do it ?"

"I did it at the Mischianza—you know I wore it then," said Althea, with her head in her portmanteau. "It caught on something—let me put it away."

"Tis ruined, I fear," said Mrs. Maverick, still holding up the ruffle. "Why, there's four inches at least of it hanging in ribbons! Did you do it as you was dancing?"

"I really don't know how I did it exactly," replied Althea, rather too indifferently. Then she held out her hand for it, saying impatiently, "Please give it me—I daresay I can mend it."

Mrs. Maverick watched Althea as she folded the ruffle and laid it in the portmanteau; and then observed with ironical emphasis,—

"In my humble opinion, my dear, a young woman as can take such a mishap so apathetic as you seem to do, has either got some trouble on her mind, or don't know the value of Mechlin lace."

"My dear cousin, I know the value of this ruffle as well as you do," said Althea, ignoring the other alternative; "but what is the use of crying over it? Crying won't mend it."

"I came in, my dear, to speak to you seriously," said Mrs. Maverick, after a pause, during which Althea went on packing. "I really think 'tis time you made up your mind about Captain André—I think you should let him have his answer——"

"He has never yet put a question," said Althea, with heightened colour. "I've nothing to reproach myself with, cousin, about him—I wish I'd as little about everybody else. 'Tis an amusement to him to make love, but he cannot say I've encouraged him. I should be vastly obliged, dear cousin, if you would not refer so often to Captain André—'tis very distasteful to me to be obliged to defend myself. He knows perfectly well that I do not encourage him; he is quite clever enough to take a hint, and I have given him plenty. Pray let the subject drop, cousin—there's nothing I so much detest as a discussion of the kind."

"Well, my dear, I'm sure I wish to say nothing more about Captain André," said the old lady; "only that I hope when we get to New York—if we ever do—you may see some one worthy of you, as you can bring your mind to think of. As for Captain André, you've only, I'm certain, to hold up your little finger——"

"My dear cousin, Captain André loves to talk of love to

every woman he meets, but 'tis all for the sake of his Honora, whom, to do him justice, he will never forget. And, though I'm sure he is an honourable man, I would not marry him, were he fifty times as irresistible as most women profess to find him. I would not marry a prince, if I need go in dread of any other woman. He has but the dregs of his heart to offer—and I don't care if I own that's not enough for me."

"Nonsense! Althea," said the old lady testily. "You talk like a silly miss in her teens. Every man has had an *affair de cur* in his time. If women was to be afraid of a man's old flames, no woman would ever marry at all. For my part," continued Mrs. Maverick, pursing up her mouth and chin, and nodding her head emphatically, "for my part,—as I think I've told you before,—when I see a young woman that don't like this one, and can't make up her mind to t'other, I always have my suspicions that Mr. Right aint far off."

Mrs. Maverick stole a sideway look at Althea as she said this, and observed an amount of confusion in that young lady's countenance, very flattering to her own penetration.

"Well," she continued, before Althea could find anything to say, "I shall go early to bed, my dear. I could not sleep a wink last night for the heat. I feel an uncommon depression of spirits, and have had an headache all day."

Althea opened her casement when she was left alone, and looked down into the street, trying to conjure up Jasper's figure. People said imagination could do anything—but Althea tried in vain to make her fancy cheat her into seeing Jasper in the form of an elderly Friend who was soberly pacing homewards. It seemed to her that she no longer knew what she desired. Whichever way she looked, she saw nothing but the same cruel perplexity. A superstitious horror fell upon her, as though she had committed a crime. Thousands had perished already, and thousands more must perish yet, in this unhappy war—her own brother might fall in it; and, knowing all this, she had given her heart to one of the most inveterate promoters of the strife! "Even if, from his point of view, he is in the right," she thought; "even if I bring myself to own that he is fighting for his country, have not I betrayed mine, and forgot every obligation I should have remembered? Am I not ashamed to tell my cousin the truth?"

But the next moment, she indignantly asked herself whether she would have been ashamed to confess it if she had loved

Noel? Even Mrs. Maverick had not thought that unnatural. Yet Noel was a rebel too. No; the sting lay deeper still—and Althea—looking down into the street where she could never hope again to watch Jasper's coming or going—sternly told herself that she was a hypocrite. "'Twas your pride was pledged to resist him; and now you are justly punished by seeing yourself compelled to humbly own you was in the wrong," she said to herself. "'Tis that you are ashamed to own; you are ashamed to say you love the man you have so long affected to hate. No!—not despise; I was never bad enough for that—though he said so!"

Here Althea permitted herself the relief of a good cry, after which she finished her packing, and then sat looking down into the street, until the stars were out.

Mrs. Maverick's headache proved to be the beginning of a nervous fever, which completely prostrated her. Her illness was brought to a crisis—she had been complaining some days—by a terrible shock she received about this time. A letter which reached her from a lady in Boston mentioned that a son of her old friend Mr. Gosforth, who had entered the Continental army, had been made prisoner in one of the winter skirmishes, and was lying in the Provost in Philadelphia. More than nine hundred prisoners were confined there; and although Mrs. Maverick had frequently visited some of those whose families she knew, it so happened that she never heard of young Mr. Gosforth being there, until the receipt of this letter, which spoke of the father's great anxiety about his son, and of his distress at having reason to believe that none of the letters he had written to him had ever reached him.

It was late in the afternoon when Mrs. Maverick received this letter, by the hands of a gentleman travelling on private business, who had accomplished his journey with great difficulty. She went the same evening to the Provost (in Walnut Street), and was infinitely shocked by meeting young Mr. Gosforth's dead body, being carried out for burial, with no attention to common decency—while the brutal Cunningham, three-parts drunk, hiccoughed out a revolting jest on the dead rebel. Cunningham (not recognising Mrs. Maverick, and taking her for a relative of the dead man) even boasted of the number of rebels who had died in that prison—hinting pretty plainly that he had helped some of them out of the world, and hoped in like manner to help many more.

Mrs. Maverick was inexpressibly horrified by the whole scene. Through the good offices of Captain André, she obtained an interview with Sir Henry Clinton, to whom she told the story, and who promised her that Cunningham should be reprimanded, and that no such thing should ever happen again.

But although Sir Henry (warned by André that Mrs. Maverick was a staunch loyalist and a person of consideration) put the best face he could on the matter, the shock threw her into a surfeit, which was further aggravated by her bitter disappointment at Congress rejecting the astonishing concessions of Administration. Mrs. Maverick's life had been entirely broken up by the rebellion—her oldest friends scattered, many of them banished and ruined, others seized as hostages and held to ransom. One had even been condemned to death, for having sent notice of the proceedings of a rebel committee to Governor Tryon; and though the sentence had not been carried out, he was still a prisoner in Connecticut. If she went back to Boston, she would find the old faces gone, the old order changed; she would hear her old friends reviled, and see the men she especially abhorred installed in their places. Her whole world had crumbled away under her feet; and now when Great Britain held out both hands in reconciliation, she saw the concessions rejected with the bitterest contempt.

"I have mourned my husband for many a year," said the poor old lady, with tears in her eyes, when she first heard how Congress had received the Bills; "but now I thank Heaven he is not alive to see this day! 'Twould have broke his heart!"

Dr. Yeldall shook his full-bottomed wig over Mrs. Maverick when he was called in, said the sultry weather was much against the patient, and asked Althea if she was out of her senses, when she inquired whether her cousin might be moved in a covered wagon?

"If you move her till I give you leave, young lady," said the doctor, shaking his forefinger at her and swelling like a turkey-cock, "I won't answer for her! Just dismiss all ideas from your mind, if you please, and observe the following:"—as he said this, the doctor threw himself back, struck his cane a smart rap on the floor, and crooking his forefinger, presented the knuckle for Miss Digby's consideration—"The patient," he began—in the tone of one delivering a lecture, and marking the various points upon his fingers—"hath a *Synocha*, or Containing fever, which is caused by the salt acrimony of the bile;

to correct this, I shall send a mixture—to be taken six times a day, warm. For the vehement thirst which attends these Continuals, you shall have an altering decoction, made from the prescription of a famous English physician. For the beating pains in the head (common in Diaries), I will make up an unguent, to be spread upon brown paper, after the manner of a blister or pultis.”

Here he paused, and appeared to fall into a cogitation.

“There is also a decoction—into which taraxacum enters”—he observed thoughtfully, “for separating the bile from the blood, should occasion call for it; or as we say in Latin, *pro re nata*. The patient being of a plethoric habit, but not venomous, *vini spiritus* may be used with safety. If she does not sleep to-night, I will exhibit laudanum. Let not the patient sink too low; ’tis easier to remedy the superabundance of humours, than ’tis to repair the wasting of the solid parts. There is an excellent mild cholagogon—’tis of chicory, endive, cream of tartar, and a little rhubarb—which seldom deceives. Should delirium prove obstinate—she must be let blood. Well, well, we must see, we must see. Keep her warm enough, but not too warm; and never mention the word New York, nor any other word calculated to excite her spirits, within earshot.”

Having said this much, Dr. Yeldall again fell into a meditation, from which suddenly rousing himself, he exclaimed briskly, —“That is all we need say to-day. Should there be any change, you know where to send for me;” and bustled off, leaving Althea terribly perplexed.

Just then, Fred came in, and she repeated to him the doctor’s opinion.

Fred received it as a matter of course. “No one in his senses would say she ought be moved,” he observed, throwing himself into the least severe of the easy-chairs. He lay back in it, and slowly flapped his hat against the arm, without speaking.

“You can’t possibly come to any hurt, nor it can’t be for long,” he continued presently. “And so far as your own feelings are concerned, I should think you’d rather prefer it than not. You’ll have Miss Fleming; they’re certain to come here as soon as we go; and in case anything was to happen to poor cousin—Good heavens! Ally, you needn’t turn so white! the doctor thinks she’ll pull round, if she’s kept quiet—but one never can tell what may happen, and ’tis always best to be prepared for the worst.”

Here Fred somewhat lost the thread of his discourse, and returned to his occupation of flapping his hat against the chair-arm.

"Pray, be still, Fred, you fidget one to death!" cried Althea, irritated by the constant flap, flap—which sounded in her ears like "Stop, stop!" and yet more distracted her already disordered thoughts. Fred flung his hat on the table, and found what solace he could for being forced to sit still, in interlacing the fingers of one hand in those of the other.

"I wonder you don't jump at the chance of stopping, Ally," he said, observing her troubled countenance. "I should, I know—that is, I mean, I should if I was you," he added in some confusion.

"I've already told you, Fred, that I shall never allow my feelings to interfere with my duty," said Althea. "And you seem quite to forget that if we stay here, I shall be parted from you."

"Of course, I shall be very sorry for that," returned Fred, rather embarrassed. "But I shall be as good as leaving you with the Branhholms."

"How do you know they are coming to Philadelphia?" asked Althea.

"They're sure to come. Fleming happened to say that they don't much care about being at Lancaster—and Oglethorpe's out of the question; so there's nowhere else they can go."

"Then we really are to remain behind?" asked Althea, her heart beating fast.

"I don't see what else you can do," returned Fred. "'Tis more nor Cousin Maverick's life is worth to move her; and, 'pon my word, Ally, I should have thought as you'd catch at it." He looked at her as she sat, perfectly still and very pale. "I'm sure I don't understand your being in such a taking. If you like Fleming as much as you ought, I wonder you ain't glad rather than sorry to stay where you can hear of him——"

"Oh, Fred," said poor Althea, quite breaking down, "can't you understand that I feel I ought not to be glad?"

"Don't cry, Ally; I don't wonder you're upset—and of course it's a cursed awkward position to be in—I told you so at first," said Fred, drawing in his legs, preparatory to extricating himself from the depths of his chair. "But enemies have fell in love with each other before now—and as the thing has come about by no fault of yours, for my part I can't see why you should cry about it."

"You take the matter very philosophical, Fred," exclaimed Althea, unreasonably provoked at Fred's reasonableness. "One would think you was not sorry to leave me behind with the Branhholms."

"I'm sure, Ally, you've no right to say that," said Fred, turning red. "We're in a quandary—but things might be worse—and why you should fly out because I'm trying to make the best of it, I'm sure I don't know."

Fred's ingenuous countenance, as he said this, betrayed a guilty self-consciousness, which Althea would have noticed at any less agitated moment. The fact was, he had been considering that, if Ally could hear of Colonel Fleming by reason of her remaining behind in Philadelphia for a time, he himself might be able, owing to the same circumstance, to hear of Miss Fleming.

Mrs. Maverick continuing in a very critical state, there was no help for it. Fred took an affectionate leave of his sister, beseeching her to contrive somehow or other to get letters to him. The poor sick lady did not know him, when he went to bid her farewell. She lay tossing uneasily on her pillow, talking incoherently about young Mr. Gosforth (whom she evidently confused with Noel Branhholm), and reproaching Althea with being the cause of his death.

Althea's distress at her cousin's condition was so evident, that Captain André left unsaid several witticisms which he had prepared as Parthian arrows. He contented himself with assuring Miss Digby that he had a prodigious esteem and admiration for Mrs. Maverick, and was most sincerely afflicted at her illness. He trusted, however, that as soon as this extraordinary heat should abate, she would begin to mend; and with so many influential friends among the rebels (as 'twould soon be unsafe to call 'em in Philadelphia), they could have no difficulty in procuring a pass to New York, when the physicians allowed Mrs. Maverick to travel.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN WHICH PEGGY SHIPPEN IS INDISCREET.

WHILE the British army marched out, and the Provincials marched in, Mrs. Maverick lay so very ill that Althea was

aware of the change only as one is aware of the rumbling of a distant storm. Their landlady's little son, a hopeful young master of eight or nine (dressed in several dozen buttons, on a short roundabout jacket), did indeed present himself at the open door of the sickroom, on the Thursday afternoon, and after intently observing Miss Digby by the space of ten minutes, removed his forefinger from the inside of his cheek, and remarked,—

"Our sojers is come ridin' in a'ready, now yours is gone."

Althea came a step or two towards him. "Hush!" she said gently, "Mrs. Maverick is asleep." At this, her visitor digressed in his stare at herself, and devoted a moment to the four-poster at the farther end of the room, his finger remaining the while suspended in mid-air.

Apparently, he found nothing so interesting as Althea, for his eyes presently returned to her countenance—his finger at the same time returning to its former abiding-place.

"I see 'em," he observed, nodding his head, and adjusting his small square person against the door-post.

"You must run away now, Tobias—you shall tell me another time," whispered Althea, taking him by the hand which was at liberty.

"Mother says you're sorry. Are you?" asked Tobias, looking up at her.

"Here is a piece of seed-cake for you," says Althea, taking a slice from a plate on the drawers. "And now run away downstairs."

"Are you sorry?" repeats the imp—taking care, however, to secure the offered cake.

Althea stooped down and kissed him. "I am sorry about a great many things which you are too young to understand," she said; and then she gently put him out, and closed the door upon him.

Tobias looked at the door, and opened his mouth to raise a yell—but his eye catching sight of the cake (he had, indeed, very nearly put the cake into the said eye, with a short-sighted intention of holding it fast), he availed himself of this action to substitute it for his finger, and presently began to go slowly downstairs—with, however, many a backward look.

At about the same hour on the following day, he again presented himself—this time with the information that General Arnold was come to town.

"I see his coach," he added after a proper pause; and in the same deliberate manner further observed, that many soldiers had come too, and that the music had played. Having imparted these facts all in a loud whisper—having regard to Mrs. Maverick's slumbers—Tobias was proceeding to ask if there was any more of that cake, as Miss Digby didn't happen to want for herself—when, somewhat to his consternation, he heard Mrs. Maverick's own voice, desiring that he would come and speak to her. As Miss Digby led him to the side of the bed, Tobias devoutly wished he had not disobeyed his mother, and come up to tease the ladies. He had always been a little in awe of Mrs. Maverick; and having heard his mother say that Dr. Yeldall was very much afraid of her, he expected nothing less than to suffer personal violence at her hands. Tobias had never read the story of Red Riding-Hood (his studies having been as yet strictly confined to the horn-book), but he felt very much as Red Riding-Hood would have felt, had she known who it was that lay in the bed inviting her nearer approach.

Mrs. Maverick, however, seen closer, had nothing terrible about her except her night-cap—a portentous structure, and just then a good deal awry. Her eyes were bright, but her voice was feeble, as she desired him to tell her all he had seen.

Tobias, thus adjured, repeated his account, but added nothing of any value, and was presently allowed to depart with a second *douceur*.

It was the time of day when the fever usually abated, but Althea was not sure that her cousin had clearly understood the child's replies. She complained that her head felt confused, and evidently thought many days had elapsed since Fred went away, for she anxiously asked whether it was known yet if they had reached New York. Then she swallowed a little of one of Dr. Yeldall's decoctions, and seemed to fall asleep instantly.

Althea had heard enough with her own ears to be aware that the Provincials had taken possession; and the doctor had mentioned that morning that General Arnold was appointed Governor of the city, and would come in in a day or two. She had heard the beat of drum and the sounds of music, and had gone to her own room (which looked on the street), and, standing behind the curtain, had seen people running, windows thrown open, and heads thrust out; but she did not choose to be seen herself, and so had seen no more.

Dr. Yeldall had proceeded to all the extremities which he had threatened, and about a week after Philadelphia had once more become a rebel city, his patient's fever began to show signs of abating. This happy result may have been due to any one (or to all combined) of three causes. First, the remedies employed may have vanquished the disease; secondly, the patient may have begun to amend in spite of those remedies; or, lastly, Althea's judicious nursing may have chiefly conduced to Mrs. Maverick's recovery.

For, whichever of these reasons it was, Mrs. Maverick awoke out of a calm sleep on the day in question, and looking at Althea, who sat reading near the bedside, declared herself better, and said that she fancied she could eat something.

As this was the moment for which the doctor had been waiting, Althea instantly sent for him, and meanwhile administered some calves'-foot jelly, the making whereof below-stairs Tobias had followed with a painfully intense interest—only equalled by his disappointment, when, seizing a fortuitous occasion, he surreptitiously swallowed a spoonful.

"Yes, child, I'm certainly better, thank God," said the old lady, when the doctor had gone away—with the assurance that the patient might yet do well, if his injunctions continued to be strictly carried out. Now in this the worthy apothecary had taken too much for granted—the fact being that, appalled by the variety, number, and quantity of his medicines, Althea had allowed herself the license of a good cook, who usually brings her own judgement to bear upon the recipes she finds in the cookery-books. She had carefully watched the patient, and had administered the doctor's remedies in such doses, and with such frequency, as seemed to be followed by the best results. Mrs. Maverick had therefore swallowed about one-fifth part of the drugs which had been prepared for her. It is, of course, open to any one to maintain that, had she taken the whole, she would have recovered in precisely one-fifth of the time required by Althea's method—a quite possible assumption, as some constitutions seem able to bear anything.

Mrs. Maverick herself took the latter view.

"You can see I have been very bad, by the quantity of bottles I've took," she observed—her eyes wandering complacently over a side-table, whereon stood bottles enough to stock a small medical-shop—seeing her in this mood, Althea thought it better to keep her own counsel.

Mrs. Maverick next asked how long she had been ill? and whether the army had really marched? and was much surprised to learn that it was a week since they had gone.

"I thought somebody told me there was a Governor appointed to the city?" she said. Althea told her that it was General Arnold, and that he had already arrived.

"Then we are actually living under a rebel Governor," sighed the poor lady. "Is not Arnold the person that young Mr. Branhholm served under? I shouldn't wonder, Althea, but what Mr. Branhholm might be here—and if he is, I dare say as he could get us a pass, as soon as I'm well enough."

It had already occurred to Althea that Noel might be in Philadelphia, and the idea had caused her no little emotion. When, next morning, Mrs. Maverick insisted on her going out for an hour, while the landlady's young daughter sat with her, it was with a fast-beating heart that she obeyed. She had some marketing to do; and, as she emerged from the gloomy recesses of each shop she visited, she glanced up and down the street, expecting every instant to see the young Virginian's well-turned figure, stepping gaily along on the shady side of the way. But the sun beat down on an almost empty street, white with dust, and with every blind drawn down to keep out the heat, which, early as it was in the day, was already intense.

Mrs. Maverick improved so much, that when, a day or two after, Peggy Shippen called to inquire how she was, she insisted on having a fresh nightcap put on, and receiving the young lady.

"'Tis not a catching fever I've had, my dear, or I wouldn't ask you to come up," said the patient, as soon as Peggy's blooming face appeared in the doorway. "But I won't let you kiss me—just by way of precaution. Sit down there, and tell me all that has been going on since I've been laid up."

Peggy accordingly sat down—looking charming, in that very chintz which Althea had admired so much—and proceeded to describe the manner in which the British army had crossed the Delaware, and how the Provincial troops had instantly taken possession of the town.

Considering that he had been in town barely a fortnight, General Arnold seemed to have made a prodigious impression on Peggy. She introduced him into her artless narrative at every turn—until Althea could no longer resist the temptation of bidding her friend take care, or Captain André would hear next that she had gone over to the rebels altogether.

This speech (which Althea made without so much as wincing) brought an earnest protestation from Peggy that Captain André might think what he pleased. If he had wrote verses to her, so he had to Peggy Chew—there was nothing in that. Could not one be friendly, without being in love? She had promised to write to him sometimes, and she should tell him herself that she thought General Arnold as great a hero as any she had ever heard of—as great, in fact, as Bruce, or Sir William Wallace, or Richard Cœur de Lion—and Major Branzholm thought so too.

At the mention of Major Branzholm, Althea experienced an uncomfortable sensation, which in some measure punished her for the effrontery of her remark to poor Peggy.

“Major Branzholm thinks the whole world of General Arnold—the *whole world*,” repeats Peggy, rather on her mettle, and looking straight at her friend. “He thinks there’s *nobody* like him.”

Here Mrs. Maverick observed that she was sorry to hear Peggy express so much admiration for a rebel, but she supposed he really was an extraordinary man; and asked how Major Branzholm was? and did he know they was in Philadelphia?

“Oh yes; I told him you was,” replied Peggy. “He *did* looked pleased, to be sure! General Arnold has made him his secretary, and everybody says he’s quite his favourite. ’Twas only last night I told him about you—he came with the General to supper—and of course I told him,” says Peggy, with that word “rebel” sticking fast in her throat, but not quite bold enough to try a *tu quoque* on Althea.

“I shall be glad to see him, when I’m equal to it,” said Mrs. Maverick wearily. “I think, my dear, as I’m a little tired, I’ll ask you to step downstairs, and have a chat with Althea, while I try to drop asleep.”

“’Twas, I protest, very unkind of you to say what you did, Althea,” said Peggy with tears in her eyes, as soon as they were safely shut in the dining-parlour. “I’m sure you couldn’t help but admire General Arnold yourself—and Congress has used him shameful—he told me so himself—and his wound will not heal, and ’twould make your heart ache to see how much he suffers! He could scarce get upstairs, even with Major Branzholm helping him—I protest it brought the tears into my eyes! And I think to go and call me a rebel is very unkind of you, and not like you, I’m sure.”

"My dearest Peggy," said Althea—her own conscience crying *tu quoque* very loud, "I never called you a rebel—I only said——"

"That Captain André would say I had become one! I think 'twas worse than if you'd called me one outright! And I'm sure I always thought you was not all that indifferent to Major Branzholm—and I hinted as much to him."

"Oh, Peggy, Peggy, you surely did not say that? what right had you to say it?" exclaimed Althea, between anger and dismay. "How dared you say such a thing, and meddle with what did not concern you, and that you knew nothing of, nor what the consequences of your words might be?"

"I'm very sorry, dear Althea, if I've done any harm," says Peggy, much distressed. "Indeed, indeed, I meant only to encourage him a little, knowing how stand-off you are. And after all, I only said that Mrs. Maverick was always talking about him, in a way that had made us have our own thoughts about how things was; and I said it more in jest, I did indeed, Althea——"

"In jest! Oh, Peggy, you know not what you may have done!" cried Althea, in such evidently genuine anxiety, that Peggy burst into tears, and repeated that she had only said it in jest, and that she was ready, if need be, to tell Major Branzholm that she had had no right to say even as much as she did. So distressed was Peggy that Althea was obliged to comfort her, and say that under some circumstances it would have been of no consequence, and she was sure Peggy had spoken out of pure good-nature.

CHAPTER XIX.

NOEL LEARNS THAT HE HAS A RIVAL.

I must have other answer, for I love you.

LOVE TRICKS.

MRS. MAVERICK had a relapse the day after Peggy's visit, and it was several days before Althea was out again. By this time news had been received of an engagement near Monmouth Court-House, in which it was said that General Lee had disobeyed an order to attack the British rear-guard, and was to be tried by court-martial. Tobias, with his usual candour, informed Miss Digby that the Britishers had been beat; but Peggy Shippen

(who of course knew all that was to be known) said that both sides claimed the victory. This, and the first terrible reports from Wyoming, were all the news from the outer world which reached Althea in her cousin's sickroom.

It was several days after this that her long-dreaded interview with Noel Branzholm took place. Althea saw him one afternoon, crossing the street (Mrs. Maverick having fallen asleep, Althea had gone down to the parlour to fetch a book), and he was shown up to her before she had time to collect herself.

Noel was excessively agitated, and his first greetings were almost incoherent. Althea thought him handsomer than ever, and was surprised to see how youthful an appearance he had preserved through so many toils and hardships. As she inquired for his father and mother, she found it almost impossible to believe that she had last seen him, nearly four years ago, riding away from Oglethorpe, to join Colonel Lewis on the Great Kenhawa.

She made a remark to this effect.

"'Tis a long while, I suppose," he said, looking eagerly at her. "To me it seems at once an age ago, and but yesterday. I have heard of you so often through my dear brother, that the separation does not seem so complete as it really was. How can I ever thank you for all your goodness to him? I little dreamed, when I showed you his letters, when we was aboard the *Fair American*, how much he was to owe you. I owe you most, though—since he's dearer to me than my own life."

No words can convey the slightest idea of the torture which every word of this speech inflicted on his listener. It was so great, that it was almost a relief to Althea, when Noel added in a more unsteady voice,—

"But we can speak of this another day. I have something else to say now. Miss Digby, ever since we parted I have looked forward to this meeting, as to the event I most desired of all that can ever concern myself; but something I have heard from Miss Peggy Shippen——"

"I'm afraid, Major Branzholm," said Althea, interrupting him—but speaking rather to gain time—"that Peggy said something very foolish—something she'd not the least right to say. I was very angry with her, when she told me about it. She is but a child, and meant no harm, but she might have done a great deal."

"I assure you, Miss Shippen is very penitent," returned Noel. "'Tis true, her first words was calculated to give me some hope, but her last gave me cause for nothing but fear. If

you require humility, I am ready to admit that you have never given me much cause of hope—yet I *have* hoped—and nothing but hearing from your own lips that you love another will ever make me cease hoping.”

Althea had sunk into a chair, unable to stand for trembling.

“Sit down,” she said faintly; and Noel took the very chair in which Fred had sat to hear her make her confession. This reminded Althea of a question which must be asked first of all.

“Have you seen your brother, or heard from him since he was here?” she said, all the blood leaving her face—except one red spot, which was lost presently in a burning blush.

“I was ordered the same day to join General Arnold,” he replied eagerly; “and, having been constantly on the move, desired my mother to keep all letters till she saw me—she is to come in a few days.”

“Then you do not know——” faltered Althea.

“I know nothing,” replied Noel, some haughtiness showing through his manifest agitation, “but that you made Miss Shippen feel she had done you a wrong, in ever so indirectly hinting to me that your indifference was assumed.”

“’Twas not assumed—nor was it indifference,” said Althea. “I had ever a sincere regard for you—though not of that nature——”

“Liking may grow to loving,” he said.

“Only if the heart is free,” she answered in a low voice.

There was a long silence. Althea could hear her heart beat, and the clock tick, and a man hammering half-way down the street. It was a long while before she ventured to look up. Noel was leaning forward in his chair, his head supported on one hand, while the other lay tightly clenched on his knee. He was gazing straight before him; the dark flush which she had noticed when he came in had deepened to an Indian swarthinness, as though the blood of his ancestress Pocahontas had leaped into his face.

With so much more that must be said, Althea could find no words that were not too abrupt and sudden—she dared not speak.

“Then your heart is not free?”

Althea started as Noel said this, and fell a-trembling worse than ever; but the necessity of speaking before he should see his mother, and receive the fatal letter, made her desperate, and she began to speak—at first in a hurried, almost incoherent manner, but growing calmer as she went on.

"I did not know—that is, I would not know it," she said. "I ought to have known it long ago, and 'tis there I have wronged you—but only there. But I told myself that 'twas not so—that the—the person I mean—was—not—in short, I told myself I disliked him, when all the while I knew I could never forget him; and I did my best to make him think I detested him, and succeeded only too well."

Having said this, Althea paused a moment to take breath, and Noel burst out impetuously,—

"Then my misery does not even make another man's happiness?"

"He imagined I only rejected you because you was—a rebel," continued Althea. "'Twas poor cousin's fault—partly; she had made up her mind that was the reason, and nothing short of my telling her the truth would ever have convinced her to the contrary. And I scarce knew myself what 'twas I felt—I was so torn between a thousand conflicting feelings; and I had no right to suppose that person—that is, though I fancied he thought better of me than I deserved, I knew he would never speak a word of love to me, even if he felt it, while he believed I had an interest in another."

"'Pon my honour, 'twas very handsome of him—and, in a British officer to a rebel, truly astonishing," said Noel ironically. "Oh, do not look amazed, Miss Digby; thanks to Miss Peggy, I have a perfect knowledge of who is my rival."

"Oh, what an unhappy woman am I!" cried Althea, bursting into tears. "There's no way out; I must, it seems, break somebody's heart!"

"You seem to have broke both the heart that loved you, and the heart you loved," he said bitterly. "I think I could have borne to see another man honestly preferred to me—I do not know, my blood is hot, and I have loved you so long—but 'tis too cruel a mockery, to tell the man you do not love that you regard him as a brother, while you make the man you love believe that you detest him!"

"I am to blame!" cried Althea in great distress. "I own it; but not as much as you think. There was a circumstance, not of my making, which made that person feel in honour bound to conceal his sentiments. Forgive my saying it—but you know I never gave you any hopes. You yourself own that I told you from the first I could only give you a sisterly regard—"

"Yes!" he cried impetuously; "but a man hopes to the

last. If he has reason to think there's no more favoured suitor, he thinks the lady may relent—and even when there is, he sometimes thinks she may change her mind."

"I cannot change," said Althea. "'Twas a strange chance that revealed my own heart to me, and a stranger one that revealed us to each other; but once done, it cannot be undone. 'Twas that person's loyalty to you, which was the main cause of our misunderstanding each other so long—for had he let me know what he felt, I could not have treated him as I did. I took a wicked pleasure in making him think I hated him——"

"Then now he knows the truth?"

Noel asked this question, as though with the answer all hope must be abandoned. Althea blushed, but answered steadily,—
"He knows—but 'twas not his doing—I was taken on a sudden by surprise, and betrayed myself. But if I am to be the unhappy cause of any enmity between you, I shall be the most wretched woman alive—the fear of it has embittered every moment——"

"Oh, don't be afraid I shall call him out!" cried Noel, with a bitter sarcasm, which terrified Althea; "and I suppose if I wished to do so, he is far enough away by this time—even if he would accept a challenge from a rebel."

"My God! one would think I had played you false!" exclaimed Althea.

"Why did you not tell me before that you loved another man?" he asked angrily. "You put me off with soft words, and talk of regard and esteem—but if you'd told me there was another man——"

"I have been wrong, though not as you think," she said. "When you know more, you'll see in what a cruel strait I was. Everything conspired against me—and, as I've told you, but for a strange chance—so strange, that I must always think 'twas providential—that person would never have guessed my feelings, and we should have parted for ever. But if it had been so, I should never have married you; I don't say it to be unkind, but only that you may not fancy you lost me by that chance."

Althea hesitated, and then added very earnestly,—
"Before it happened, I had sent word to you by your brother that I could never marry you. Afterwards, I wrote to you—remember, as you read that letter, what I've told you—and that the person to whom it refers refrained wholly on your account from seeking an explanation with me long ago—and I knew it."

Even the raging jealousy which filled Noel's heart could not make him quite deaf to Althea's pleading. There was so much tenderness and humility in her tone, and she so evidently desired as much as possible to soften the blow she had given him, that his first angry thought that he had been played with yielded for the moment to a more generous feeling, and he said magnanimously,—“A man, I suppose, must needs hate his rival—but mine hath, I must confess it, used the advantage he had of me with so honourable a self-denial as I fear I could not have imitated. That you prefer him, is my misfortune, not his fault. And though I can scarce forgive him, he hath left me no excuse for hating him.” Noel had said thus much calmly enough. He went on more passionately,—“But, oh, Althea, I can scarce think he loves you as I do! He cannot say, as I can, that he never loved but you. All the world knows he loved a lady in England—and half Philadelphia thinks 'twas Peggy Shippen he sought here. By heaven, Althea, I will not give up hope! I cannot lose you! Why should I not say it? This honourable silence you make so much of, he *could* not have maintained it so long, if his love had been like mine! Seeing you so often, he *must* have betrayed himself before this! Mere generosity to a man he had never seen could not have so long mastered the strongest passion of our nature. Althea, you are casting away my immutable affection for the shallow fancy of a man who is—his very friends allow it—a general admirer. I do not say this to traduce him—I do not mean to cast a doubt on his sincerity—but how paltry must not his affection be, compared to mine! I will not insult you by talking of prospects—I know 'tis the man must win you—but I am as good a man as Captain André; a Virginian gentleman is as good any day as a soldier of fortune—and I offer you a heart which hath never been devoted to any other woman——”

Althea had in vain attempted to interrupt him—his words came like a torrent that would not be stayed; and only the opening of the door stayed them now.

“'Tis not Captain André!” she said, desperately clutching at this instant of silence; and then, turning to the door, saw Peggy Shippen—who, on perceiving Major Branzholm, seemed half inclined to run away.

“May I see you again—this evening?” Noel asked hurriedly. “I promise you I will be calmer, but I must know all; I see there's some misunderstanding——”

"I'll come in again, Althea," said Peggy, who had not stirred from the door. But Noel had pressed Althea's hand and turned away. He made a polite excuse to Miss Shippen, said that General Arnold would be expecting him, and was gone before Peggy could recover from her confusion.

"Oh, Althea," she cried earnestly, "how sorry I am I came in! If I had known Major Branhholm was here, I hope you don't think I'd have come!"

"Dear Peggy, I think I'm glad you did," returned Althea, who was quite upset; "for though we had not come to the end of our explanation, I've sufficiently broke the ice to be able to write the rest, and I would rather stand to be shot at, than go through another such ordeal! I can't tell you now, but you'll know soon. Oh, Peggy, I'm in such an agitation, I don't know what I'm saying! You little guess in what a position I'm placed——"

Althea relieved herself by shedding a few tears on Peggy's neck, amidst which she said,—

"You naughty girl, you led Major Branhholm to suppose there was something between me and Captain André."

"Well, and aint there?" asked Peggy innocently. "I'm sure everybody thinks there is."

"I could find it in my heart to be very angry with you, Peggy——"

"I'll tell you exactly how 'twas," cries Peggy. "'Twas the evening General Arnold came to supper the second time—and my sister Betsy twitted me about Captain André, and General Arnold said, with a deal of meaning, that from all he'd heard, Captain André was a very dangerous young gentleman—and he looked hard at me, as if he'd say, 'And Miss Peggy, I doubt, has found him so.' And I was mad that General Arnold should think me so silly, so I spoke up, and said for my part Captain André might go to New York if he liked, and I wished him a safe arrival, and not to come back here any more—though to be sure, I said, 'twas Miss Digby he admired, and not me—and then I said I believed you had refused to be one of the ladies in the Mischianza, on purpose not to be *his* lady, because people had talked. And I gave Betsy my mind when we went to bed!"

Althea looked wistfully at Peggy's blooming cheeks and clear young eyes, and seemed going to say something, but she only kissed her and sighed.

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH ALTHEA OBSERVES THAT ONE REBEL IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER.

As soon as Peggy was gone, Althea went up to Mrs. Maverick's room, and, finding her still disposed for sleep, wrote a letter to Noel, to be given him if he should come that evening. But he did not come. He only sent a note by his servant, Black Billy, who was instructed to say that there was no answer, and was off so quickly, that there was no time to give him Miss Digby's letter.

Tobias, at his own request, conveyed Major Branhholm's missive into Miss Digby's hands. Evidently, something he saw in her face did not encourage him to prolong his visit, for—having glanced round to see if there might be anything about of an edible nature, and perceiving nothing but a cup of jelly—he drew his breath hard, inserted his finger more firmly in his cheek, and sadly withdrew—casting, however, so many backward looks, that he missed his footing, and fell down the first flight of stairs. Attempts to cry out during this too hasty descent produced only a succession of breathless and unearthly grunts; but, once arrived at the landing, he set up a sustained howl, which only partially subsided when Althea, who had run out on hearing him fall, took him up in her arms, and carried him bodily off to his mother.

“Didn't that tiresome child bring up a note?” asked Mrs. Maverick, when Althea came up again—after a longer delay than seemed necessary. “Who was it from?”

“Major Branhholm——”

“Now I look at you, Althea, I believe you have been crying—though you look better now you did in the spring. I wish, my dear, you'd treat me with a little more confidence, and let me know what there really is between you and Major Branhholm. I take it very unkind that you keep me in the dark,” said the poor old lady, with the peevishness of sickness.

“There's nothing, and never has been, cousin,” said Althea, turning her head away, as she stood by the dimity-covered chair in which Mrs. Maverick was sitting, propped up with pillows.

“That's the old story,” exclaimed Mrs. Maverick tartly;

"nothing—always nothing! *Nothing* don't make a fine young woman grow pinched and haggard—and won't hear a word about marrying, and huffs off one offer after another. Oh, you may toss your head! but there was Major Williams admired you vastly, and Mr. Burnet's cousin—I forget his name—and plenty more. You've had no lack of admirers—and I'm sure you aint by nature a prude! so if you huff 'em all off, it must be because you've fixed your inclinations elsewhere."

"But not on Noel Branhholm," said Althea in a low voice.

"Good gracious heavens! then why have you allowed Captain André to think so?" cried Mrs. Maverick. "I wonder, with your pride——"

"He chose to think it; I never said so," said Althea with provoking coolness. And then, all of a sudden, she knelt down and hid her face on the arm of the chair—a soft-padded and wide-spreading arm, which seemed to invite confidence—and said in a very low voice,—“Is there no one else, cousin, that you have never reproached me for not liking—no one you thought I disliked? Did you never think 'twas possible I was so insensible to one brother, because I saw too plainly the worth of the other?”

Mrs. Maverick was so completely taken by surprise that, forgetting her weakness, she seized Althea's hands, and pulled them from that young lady's somewhat confused countenance, before she had time to resist.

"Bless me! you may well blush, I'm sure!" she exclaimed, sinking back in her chair, but gripping Althea pretty firmly by the chin. "I never met with such duplicity in the whole course of my life! How long, pray, has this farce been going on? I wonder you can look me in the face——"

"I never intended to deceive you, cousin," began Althea, proudly meeting her cousin's eyes. But her own were full of tears, and she patiently submitted to be held in this ignominious fashion, until Mrs. Maverick's hand sank feebly on her knee.

"I declare, you've took my breath away, child," she said. "Who would ever have believed it possible? So obstinate a rebel——"

"You thought it possible I might feel an inclination for Major Branhholm—and I don't see but what one rebel is as good as another," returned Althea with some spirit.

"Ah, but he is a Virginian—I can never think of him merely

as a rebel," answered the old lady, with the logic unjustly said to be peculiar to her sex.

"Colonel Fleming is a Virginian too, on his mother's side," observed Althea.

"Indeed, Miss ! how long have you discovered that ?" cried Mrs. Maverick, half in jest, but half angry too. "I insist upon knowing how long this double game has been going on——"

At this Althea burst into tears, exclaiming that 'twas very cruel to use such words, and protesting that she had hated the Colonel from the bottom of her heart, until the news came that he was killed—since which, she further protested, she had never known a happy moment for thinking how unkind she had been to him.

"Um," says the old lady, throwing a whole volume of satire into that one indeterminate syllable. "So this, I suppose, is the explanation of his being in such extraordinary good spirits ? And pray, when did you settle it all ?"

At this Althea (who really took all this snubbing with a deal of meekness) sobbed that it was very hard to be treated in this way, for what one could not help—she was sure she had tried hard enough not to like Colonel Fleming—and the situation was dreadful enough, without anybody reproaching her. To which her cousin replied by bidding her leave her alone a little, and let her think about it, for the news had taken her breath away, and set her head all of a whirl.

CHAPTER XXI.

A DARK HOUR.

Misery, like night, is haunted with ill spirits.

THYESTES.

WHEN Althea said that the situation was dreadful, she did not speak without warrant. The note which Tobias had brought her was very brief—it contained only the words : "My mother and cousin are come, and I have received your letter."

Althea looked at these words, until they seemed to be printed on her brain. She tried to guess at the mood in which they had been written, and imagined a meaning in every unsteady line of the writing—for Noel's dashing hand was less clear than usual,

and the last word was blurred. She went to bed very unhappy, and dreamed that Noel had sent Tobias with a challenge—either to his brother or to Captain André—they were inextricably mixed up in the dream. Althea awoke with a bad headache, and a sense of impending calamity, which ill prepared her to hear that the British army had been attacked and defeated by General Washington, at Monmouth.

Further reports did not confirm the news of the defeat—though every one agreed in laying the blame on General Lee—but the engagement had been hot while it lasted, in more senses than one—having been fought on a day of such intense heat, that it was said more than fifty men fell dead without a wound.

It was an inexpressible comfort to Althea, in this suspense, to receive a visit from Mary Fleming.

"Oh, Mary, I was never so glad to see any one in my life, as I am to see you!" cried Althea, throwing her arms round Mary's neck.

"What, not even Jasper?" whispers Mary wickedly.

"No—seeing him was not all pleasure—nor thinking of him either. You may laugh, but I protest I never felt much more miserable in my life," says Althea, laying her head very disconsolately on Mary's shoulder. "Sit down," she said presently. "There's a thousand things I've got to ask you, and I don't know what to begin with. You've got my letter, I suppose——" here Althea faltered a little—"Was you very much surprised?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, Althea," said Mary very deliberately, "I had been expecting it so long, that I had begun to think it never would come about!"

Mary had sat down, and was looking at Althea with an expression which had grown very grave.

"In Heaven's name, Mary, what is the matter? Has—any misfortune happened?" cried Althea, not daring to ask a more definite question.

Upon this Mary told her that as soon as they arrived they had sent to inform Noel, who had come round from Market Street almost immediately. He had appeared much disturbed, but had greeted them affectionately, and had waited upon Baron Steuben, who was lodged in the same house, and whose aide had been given the room which Mary had formerly occupied. By the courtesy of the Baron and his aide, Noel had been able to

arrange this matter; but on returning to his mother's apartment to tell her this, he had excused himself from staying any longer, saying that General Arnold was waiting for him. Before he went, however, he had asked if Mary had not some letters for him, and had taken them away with him.

"We neither of us said a word to him about you," said Mary. "My aunt has been in a perfect fever, ever since Jasper brought us your letter; and we both thought Noel had better learn it from you. He did not mention you, till he was going out at the door; and then he turned back and said,—'By the way, Mrs. Maverick was left behind very sick. You should go and see her—she is in Market Street, at Mrs. Greenway's, just opposite the chemist's.'"

"Well?" said Althea, as Mary paused.

"Then he went away. But this morning, the first thing, Black Billy brought this."

Mary here explored the recesses of the bag which served her for a pocket, and produced a small note. In it Noel merely said that he was that instant starting for Virginia on public business, and knew not how long he might be gone.

Mary had not yet shown this note to her aunt, having thought it best to see Althea first; but it was evident that the same thought had occurred to both the girls—that Noel's departure might have some other object than public business.

"'Twill be easy to find out, without directly asking, whether he was sent, or whether he asked for leave," observed Mary, after a pause.

Then Althea broke out into passionate complaints against the cruel fate which had doomed her to be the unwilling cause of misery to those she loved best. Was it a fault, she asked, to have admitted Noel to an innocent friendship? She had not contrived that they should sail in the same ship from England—she had believed till the very day they sailed that he was to remain over the winter. Fred knew whether on the voyage she had treated him otherwise than as a young brother. As though some instinct had forewarned her, she had checked even such harmless familiarities as everybody permits, and had been for ever parading the reserve of English manners. "I behaved like the veriest prude!" said Althea, almost sobbing. "He was so young—so boyish; I saw I could play with him as I pleased, but God knows I did not! As soon as ever I saw his brother, I knew 'twas only some such man as he

that could win me—but his path led where I was determined never to follow—yet knowing him, made me more shy with Noel than ever. You know, Mary, that at Oglethorpe——”

“I knew at Oglethorpe that you did not love Noel, and I fancied that you loved Jasper,” said Mary, her colour rising a little.

Althea protested that she had not—that on the contrary she had always considered that everything, including Noel’s unlucky fancy, put it out of the question—that even when she had suddenly learned that Jasper was not dead, she had carefully repressed all personal feelings. And after all, what wrong had she done to Noel? she asked. The brother of the man she preferred was the last man in the world that she could marry—the very idea was horrible—indelicate to the last degree! She had resolved to keep aloof from both, as the only thing she could do—and but for an extraordinary sport of fate she would have done it. In a few days more, she would have been safe in New York, and everything over for ever.

“And I wish it had been so,” she sobbed—“though in that case I should, I know, never have had another happy moment as long as I lived! But even that would have been better than their quarrelling—perhaps fighting—about me!”

“I hope you don’t think, Althea,” said Mary with some warmth, “that Noel is so wicked as that? After what you say you told him yesterday, he must know that Jasper is even less to blame than you are yourself.”

At this Althea ceased weeping, and haughtily desired to be informed in what single particular she had been to blame?

“I never said you was to blame—nor ever thought it,” said Mary. “I said, ‘even less to blame than yourself.’”

“That implies I *am* to blame,” says Althea stiffly. “But I might have expected you would turn against me; I can’t wonder at it;” here she began to cry again. “I have brought you so much misery, I can’t expect you should do me justice!”

“But I do, dearest Althea—more perhaps than you know—but when you seemed to fear Noel might lift his hand against the brother whom he has idolised all his life, I confess I was hurt.”

“I’m too miserable to be reasonable—forgive me, Mary,” sobbed Althea. “I could almost wish I had never been born! How shall I meet your aunt? Will she not curse me?”

* * * * *

Noel left Althea in the full persuasion that his fortunate

rival was one of the many agreeable young British officers, whose praises had been sung to him by the ladies ever since he came to town. Her assurance that it was not Captain André had greatly surprised him. At the same time, it rekindled a spark of hope. The irresistible Captain André would indeed have been a formidable rival! The Unknown, be he who he might, must be less to be feared! Perhaps she had accepted him out of a sort of generous pity—he had heard of such things. At any rate, it was not André; and there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.

But all this was specious reasoning, and he knew it; and it was with a sinking heart and trembling hands that he opened Althea's letter—breaking, though he did not know it, the seal which Jasper himself had made.

As he read, it seemed to him that his heart had turned to stone; a numbness seized all his limbs, and with a stifled groan he sank forward on the table at which he was sitting.

It had been daylight when he read the letter; when he came to himself, it was dark. His brain seemed on fire. For a few moments, a great terror took hold of him. The darkness seemed to hem him in; perhaps it was only the strained position in which he had been lying which made him feel as though his arms were pinioned—he shook himself before he could be quite sure it was an illusion.

In the first instant of returning consciousness, he had been aware of a great calamity; but as the contents of Althea's letter returned to his memory, a perfect tempest of anguish swept over him—the whole universe seemed to have suddenly vanished into nothing and darkness, leaving but one clear thought amidst the chaos—Althea would be Jasper's wife. If time is to be measured by emotion, those few moments must be counted to Noel as years.

Presently, however, life began to reassert itself—and just as his bodily eyes perceived a star shining clear over the opposite house-roofs, the wild desire which had possessed him for an instant, to take but one leap at once out of life and pain, yielded to a mad impatience to read the letter once more, and assure himself it was not a mere nightmare.

Oddly enough, that one star, so like an eye looking out of heaven, had suddenly recalled the evening long ago, when, rowing up the Chaudière famished and exhausted, his sick and weary brain had conjured up the image of Mary Fleming.

He found the tinder-box and began to strike a light. He was a long while about it—flint and steel would not be hurried—but at last he succeeded in igniting the tinder, and setting light to the match. Noel's room was at the top of the house, but he had had it fitted up partly as a writing-room, and there were always wax-candles on his writing-table. As he lighted them, he caught sight of his face reflected in a mirror which hung against the wall. "Good God!" he thought, as he started at his own image—pale as death, except for some red streaks which made the general pallor more conspicuous—"I look like a murderer! Am I come to this?"

But Noel judged himself too hardly. Althea's words, little as he had understood them at the time, came back to him now, and even in the first agony of rage and jealousy, he had instinctively shrunk from letting his angry thoughts fasten on Jasper's image. He had cursed fate—but not Jasper. If he could have doubted Jasper, it would, he felt, have upset his reason. As it was, he was stunned. He had said to-day to Althea, that he could have borne to see another man honestly preferred to himself. So he thought he could—if it had been Captain André. What is, so often seems less bearable than what might be!

He read Althea's letter again—trying as he did so to remember all she had said to him about his unknown rival. He was still staring at the lines, with eyes that did not see them, when he bethought him that Mary had given him a second letter, addressed in his brother's hand. It had fallen on the floor. Noel picked it up and turned it over more than once before he broke the seal.

The letter was not long, and had evidently been written with a very bad pen—being, indeed, no other than the one with which Old Hallibut oiled his locks—but it was perfectly legible, and Noel, as he read, seemed to hear his brother's voice speaking.

"I could easily multiply words," wrote Jasper; "but there is but one thing much worth saying. I never was false to you—nor ever had any suspicion of the truth until the last instant. Had I been less zealous in your cause, I should not have learned it even then. Had I been ready to supplant you, I had eight months in Boston in which to do it. What I suffered then, day by day, ought (if you could realise it to yourself) to plead for me even at this moment. To think that the woman you love despises you, and to feel bound in honour to be rather glad

than otherwise that 'tis so—imagine, if you can, what that is ! Yet now, in the first moments of knowing my own happiness, I have wished a hundred times that Digby had left me to die in Boston Jail, before I came between you and his sister. I write this, having just heard what must take me whence I may never return ; but, if these are my last words, I say that God knows I was true to you."

As Noel read Jasper's letter, and looked back on the past two years, he called himself a thousand fools for not having seen it before. And then he began to bitterly reproach his brother in his heart for his very loyalty. "Why did he not tell me his own heart was engaged too?" he asked himself angrily. "There have been honourable rivals before now, who have agreed to try their fate, and accept the lady's decision. 'Twas but a cruel kindness to leave me in the dark. He must have been blind not to perceive she preferred him!"

By this time, those drops of wild Indian blood which Noel derived from the passionate heart of Princess Pocahontas were dancing about in his veins, like warriors round a camp-fire. Even they could not make him face the thought of killing Jasper, but he was aware of a fierce desire to kill somebody—or, as the next best thing, to get himself killed at the earliest possible opportunity. Visions of rushing madly into the midst of the enemy's ranks, and falling under a hundred wounds, presented themselves as the most heroic way of leaving a world suddenly become hateful. Meanwhile, he resolved to ask for a furlough, and go—no matter where, so long as it was out of Philadelphia.

He had just come to this resolution, and was endeavouring to think more calmly of what he should do, when a knock came at his door, and Black Billy, in a loud whisper through the keyhole, informed his master that the Governor wanted him—"in de deble's own hurry," added Billy, in a yet more impressive whisper.

When Noel, having hastily composed himself, went to the Governor's private room, Arnold looked at him sharply, and asked him if he was ill? Then, before Noel could answer, he said that some one must be found instantly to carry a despatch to Colonel Clark, who was on the point of starting to chastise the Indians in the Illinois country.

"Will you send me, sir?" said Noel, so eagerly that the

General looked at him curiously. He turned over his papers before he replied, glancing at Noel from time to time.

"The service might take from a fortnight to three weeks," he observed. "I do not see how I can spare you so long."

Noel sat respectfully silent, but was so evidently disappointed that the General once more asked what ailed him?

"I—I am not very well, sir—that is, I think a few days' hard riding might—restore me," stammered Noel.

"You mean, I suppose, that you wish to be out of Philadelphia for a few days," says the General, looking at him very hard, as he wipes his pen, and perfectly well remembering that Peggy Shippen had said Captain André admired Miss Digby.

"Well," says the General presently, eyeing his young secretary's haggard countenance with a grim smile of pity. "You look out of sorts. I suppose I shall have you laid up, if I don't let you go. Knox pretends he dursn't let his wife come in, the place stinks so. I don't observe it—but you'd better go. Don't get yourself killed; and get back as soon as you can. These sleek fat Philadelphians mean I shall not sit on roses—they think a military Governor is to be their creature, and stand cap in hand before their high mightinesses. You must start in two hours. Here are your despatches, and these are your instructions. Give me your full attention, whilst I explain them to you."

It was thus that Major Branhholm vanished so suddenly from Philadelphia.

CHAPTER XXII.

NOEL LOOKS BACK.

MAJOR BRANXHOLM returned, after about a fortnight's absence, looking not much the better for his hard riding. He had, indeed, ridden very hard, and, finding on his return journey that he was within a day's ride of Oglethorpe, and that he had discharged his duty rather under the time assigned to him by General Arnold, he had paid it a flying visit—to the immense delight of Nebuchadnezzar, who insisted on giving an account of his vice-regency, in a grandiloquent style worthy of Lord Baltimore himself.

To Noel everything at Oglethorpe seemed changed. As he stood in the great verandah, and tried to recall the evening

when with Mary and Althea he had watched the mysterious armies contending in the clouds, the very hills themselves seemed to wear an unfamiliar expression. How often had he dreamed of bringing Althea home! Perhaps the fiercest struggle of all was fought out here, in his old home, as he forced himself to look forward to the future. Of course, he should never marry—as the years went on, he would be left alone at Oglethorpe. It would be better never to see Althea. Mary would marry Graydon's cousin—any fool, it seemed, could get a sensible woman to marry him!

From these profitable reflections, he was aroused by a smart peck, which drew blood from his finger, and became aware that for the last five minutes Polyphemus had been endeavouring to get at a ring whose stone flashed invitingly in the candle-light. It was a sultry night, and the window was open. Noel made no attempt to go to bed. Perhaps the wound on the head which he had received at Saratoga had increased his natural excitability; but his situation was sufficiently strange to account for the odd fancies which beset him. He imagined that the very bed-posts wore a look of intelligence, and that the old-fashioned ewer winked at him. He was terribly oppressed by the loneliness of the great empty house—room after room, as he knew, lying in unechoing silence—unless, perhaps, the mice kept holiday there. One had just scampered across his own chamber-floor, to be instantly pursued by Polyphemus, who after reconnoitring the wainscot, had retired to a chair-back, and seemed to Noel like an incarnate Evil Genius. A bat flew in, and put out the candle, just as Noel's ear was caught by an indistinct sound without. Before he could relight it, he heard Nebuchadnezzar's voice, calling as he ran along the corridor,—“Mas'r Noel! Mas'r Noel! wake up! wake up! de Injuns is on us!”

For the next two or three hours, it seemed quite possible that Noel's future was about to be provided for in the simplest possible fashion. An express had come in—sent to warn all the valley of an Indian raid. His report was derived at second-hand from those who had seen the Indians marching; but vague as the warning was, it could not be neglected. Oglethorpe, already in a position of defence, was hastily turned into a fortress—windows boarded up, bushes cut down, and all the negroes collected in the house. Half-a-dozen white men came in before morning, and Noel had his own escort—consisting, however, of only two

troopers. Nothing could be done till daylight. By all accounts the Indians must be at least fifteen miles off, and could hardly arrive before dawn—their usual time for attacking. Noel had not contemplated seeking death from Indian tomahawks, when he conjured up that reckless charge which was to solve all his difficulties. If the expressman's report was true, there could be little hope of doing more than selling their lives as dear as possible, and not falling alive into the hands of those incarnate fiends.

It is a singular fact (and one which those philosophers who doubt whether life be worth living appear to be scarcely aware of), that the more certain and inevitable death seems to be, the less does he seem desirable. Very few persons of even apparently sound mind try to commit suicide a second time. At sunset, Noel Branzholm honestly fancied that he could hail death as a deliverer. By the next day at noon, he heard with infinite joy that—so far as regarded Oglethorpe—the alarm was false. It was true that a band of Shawnees had crossed the Alleghanies, and taken some spoil, but they had recrossed the mountains, and the panic around Oglethorpe had had no more formidable origin than the unearthly yells raised by a party of drunken troopers, and half-a-dozen negroes, who were out seeking some strayed cattle.

If Noel had needed anything more to reconcile him to continued existence, he must have found it in the horror and thankfulness with which his mother and Mary listened to this tale—which he had strictly charged Black Billy not to divulge, but which Billy confided (under an oath of secrecy) to the black man at the Slate-Roof House, from whom it rapidly spread until every one had heard it.

Mrs. Branzholm had a long and confidential conversation with her younger son about this time, in the course of which she displayed more wisdom than might have been expected of so impulsive a person. But she could not find much to say in answer to Noel's pitiful complaint that if it had been Captain André, and Althea had been going back to England, he might have got over it in time; but that he was certain he could never bear to meet her as Jasper's wife—the very love he bore his brother made it, he said, the more agonising—since the feelings he could not control were a wrong to Jasper. He wished he had never been born——

"Then your father and I count for nothing, cruel boy!" cries his mother, bursting into tears. "As though I had not suffered enough since the war began—my hair's gone white—I should think you might see it—with always expecting to hear my husband or my sons was killed—but my sons must quarrel, and declare they never can meet each other again!"

"Did Jasper say we never could meet again?" asked Noel, turning pale and the tears starting to his eyes. "I should not have thought he cared so little for me, as to give me up so easy——"

"He did not say it in the way you imagine—the wicked way you've just said it yourself," said his mother—whose woman's wit showed her in an instant that she had accidentally touched the right string. "He sacrificed his inclinations for your sake—you seem to have quite forgot that. You made him carry your message to Althea—and Althea told me how hard he pleaded for you, and how it maddened her, when she loved him all the time. And though I never guessed the cause of his melancholy, I saw how changed he was—and so did you, at Valley Forge, and told me you'd give your life to make him smile as he used to! I thought what a loving generous brother you was, and how blessed I was to have two such sons—and now you say you never wish to see him again!"

"I didn't say so, mother; I said the feelings I can't control would make it so painful for us both and—for all parties concerned—that we'd best not meet. And Jasper, it seems, agrees with me, though I own I'm hurt he could say it so coldly——"

"You are wickedly determined to misinterpret him!" said Mrs. Branzholm. "Cold indeed! when was Jasper ever cold? He is in the utmost distress about you; he told me with tears in his eyes, that the thought of his gain being your loss must be a perpetual grief to him. 'Twill come between us—I foresee it,' he said; 'Noel will, I fear, never get over the soreness.' Very few brothers, let me tell you, are like him. Ever since you was a baby, he was wrapt up in you. I've seen him carry you in his arms for hours together, as if he was your nurse instead of your brother. And when he went away to Boston to his uncle's, he cried all night, and the last thing he said when he went away was, 'Mother, do take care of Noel, for if anything was to happen to him, 'twould break my heart.'"

"I know it all!" cried Noel, the tears in his eyes oddly

struggling with a smile provoked by memories of the happy-go-lucky bringing-up they had enjoyed at Oglethorpe and the sundry kinds of dangers their childhood had incurred—which fully explained Jasper's anxiety.

"Oh, gracious Heaven! he is gone distracted!" exclaimed Mrs. Branhholm, wildly wringing her hands, as Noel suddenly burst out laughing. "Mary! Mary!"

"Nay, mother, I'm not distracted, though I've enough to make me," said Noel, gently detaining her, as she was about to run out of the room to call for help. "God knows I'm not in a laughing humour—but I remembered letting Jasper down the well—'twas to save me from going that he went."

"Don't cry, my dear boy, don't—" said his mother, soothing him as if he had been a baby, "though perhaps 'twill do you good."

The adventure of the well, which thus moved Noel to laughter and tears, was on this wise. Noel, while still wearing his first suit of distinctly masculine attire, was possessed by a vehement longing to see what was down a certain well. For this, Uncle Memnon was greatly responsible—as, whenever he was unduly pressed by the children to account for the origin or end of his mythical personages, his reply invariably was that the prince, princess, dwarf, giant, ogre, or dragon, had come up out of, or had vanished down, the well aforesaid. Noel, for whom a daring scheme always had a huge fascination, proposed to Jasper that they should go down, and see what was there in very deed—Nebuchadnezzar having broadly hinted that Uncle Memnon's stories were "stuff and lies." Jasper's more mature judgement vainly represented that the well was deep, that the chain might break, and that whatever might not be at the bottom, there would certainly be water enough to drown one.

The boys argued this point till they came to words—Jasper declaring nothing should induce him to let Noel down; while Noel, with undignified tears, vowed he would let himself down some day when there was nobody by—but go down he would. So saying, he began to march off in dudgeon, with as much dignity as five years can command, and was engaged in maturing a plan for letting down the bucket, when Jasper followed him, and offered to be let down himself on condition Noel would promise never to go. After much demur, this offer was somewhat ungraciously accepted—it being obvious to the meanest understanding that Jasper was getting the best of the

bargain. He accordingly put his feet into the bucket, grasped the chain, and directed his brother to unwind slowly.

But alas ! Jasper had entirely left out of account the Laws of Motion, and of Natural Philosophy in general. No sooner had Noel's infantile hands, with infinite labour, made half a turn at the windlass, than it flew out of his fingers of (as it appeared) its own proper motion, and spun round and round, faster and faster—the handle hitting Noel a smart blow on the chest as he wildly clutched at it—until it stopped with a jerk and a quiver.

It was fortunate for Jasper that the chain, being clumsy, considerably modified that ratio of impetus known as the Law of Falling Bodies. But he was brought up with an ugly jolt, and very nearly lost his hold. Noel alternately shrieked for help, and tried to look down the well—with feelings of despair, to describe which words are totally inadequate. Several weeks appeared to him to have elapsed before Nebuchadnezzar came running up, attracted by his young master's cries. His horror on the situation being hastily explained to him, nearly drove Noel to jump down the well after his brother.

"He dead for certain—dere aint no more hopes on him nor what dere is on a door-nail !" he exclaimed, tearing his woolly top-knot. "Mas'r Jasper, you dead ?" he bellowed, leaning over the well. Never did Noel forget the rapture with which he heard a hollow voice reply, faint and far, and as from the bowels of the earth,—

"Wind me up gently, and dont jolt me !"

And in due time Jasper reappeared—wet to the middle, and with pale face and bleeding hands, but otherwise unhurt—and, having regained the upper air, remarked, with well dissembled coolness, that, as he had expected, there was nothing on earth to see when you was down. But though Jasper thus chose to brave it out, he was more shaken than he would own, and was ill the next day—whereupon Noel confessed the whole affair.

The remembrance of this escapade, which had so nearly been a tragedy, knocked strangely now at Noel's heart, and asked him what he was doing ? He had hitherto taken for granted that he could put an end to the estrangement between his brother and himself by a word ; and, although the wound was still too recent for him to be able to utter that word, he knew he should say it sooner or later. It was quite a new idea that Jasper should see any difficulty in a reconciliation. Noel keenly resented it—but the effect upon his mind was not altogether unwholesome.

CHAPTER XXIII.

RUDE BOREAS.

" If France and Spain had not joined America,
Both by the land and sea,
Mine Got ! George King would make dem know
For vat dey spill'd his tea ! "

If Captain Digby had been apt at Scripture quotations, he might have been tempted to say that the stars in their courses fought against him. A fairer opportunity for a decisive battle was never offered, than on the parched and sandy field of Monmouth, and Digby bitterly lamented the extraordinary and intolerable heat of the weather, which alone, he believed, had deprived the British arms of a great victory.

The rebels, while admitting that the 28th of June, 1778, was the hottest day ever known, attributed *their* failure to gain a great victory to the ill conduct of General Lee. Vaulting ambition never overleapt its selle more wofully than in his case. Whether he was a deliberate traitor—or only an ambitious intriguer—may possibly be open to doubt ; but there can be no doubt that his disobedience at Monmouth was due to his determination to outshine his Commander—or that this disobedience was as great a mistake as that other disobedience had been, which had resulted in his ignominious capture at Baskenridge.

The Powers of Nature did not confine their interference to the land. Those somewhat pagan references to Old Neptune in which naval poets so frequently indulge, might very well have been suggested by the part which the winds and waves played on the coasts of North America, during the weeks immediately following the evacuation of Philadelphia. Nor was that other pagan divinity, Madam Fortune, much less conspicuous.

Old Neptune began his work insidiously. First of all, by a series of calms, he kept Admiral Howe in the Delaware with his transports, until the very day that the Battle of Monmouth was fought, and did not let him anchor off Sandy Hook till the next afternoon. In a terrible storm of the last winter the sea had broken over, and made the Hook an island, and the Admiral had to build a bridge of boats in all haste—though

even he did not know how urgent the case was, and that the French squadron had got out of Toulon, and would have been down upon him while he was entangled in the navigation of the Delaware, but for contrary winds—for Old Neptune showed no respect of persons.

Sir Henry Clinton reached Middletown the same day, and there halted his main army, in the hope of tempting Washington to renew the battle. Meantime, the sick and wounded, the baggage, horses and cattle were sent across, and on the 3d of July, the entire army passed to Sandy Hook in two hours, and were safe in New York before night.

Sir Henry had barely received General Pigot's report of what had been done in Rhode Island, when news came that D'Estaing had been seen off Virginia on the 5th—and on the evening of the 11th, fifteen French sail dropped anchor outside Sandy Hook bar.

The utmost excitement prevailed in New York. The British fleet was too inferior in numbers to risk an engagement; but Admiral Byron's squadron was expected every day, and meanwhile the most strenuous preparations were being made by Lord Howe; and many officers of the army volunteered—among them some with wounds still unhealed from Monmouth. Captain Digby was one of these; entirely disregarding a bad sword-cut on the shoulder, he offered his services, and had the luck to draw a fortunate lot (for there were more volunteers than could possibly be accepted), and to find himself on board Commodore Hotham's ship, the *Preston*, when, on the morning of the 22d, the Frenchmen, drawn up in line-of-battle, seemed to be coming over the bar. It was the spring-tides, with an easterly wind, and the water had risen thirty feet over-bar that afternoon. It was said that Black Dick himself thought the odds too great; but few, indeed, were the Englishmen who at the bottom of their hearts were not praying Heaven that D'Estaing might get a pilot to put him over, and who were not grievously disappointed, when those swelling sails stood away to the southward, with the wind on their larboard quarter—watched by thousands of eyes, till the last top-gallant was a speck on the horizon.

Three days after this, the *Despatch* came in from Halifax, with the *Renown*; and in another day or two, Byron's squadron began to drop in—not riding proudly with all sail set and colours flying, but dismasted, disabled, and all but wrecks.

The Admiral had been caught in a storm on the 3d, and his ships driven no one knew whither. Howe determined not to wait for him—especially as he had received intelligence from Captain Brisbane (stationed off Newport in the *Flora*), that D'Estaing had reappeared off Rhode Island. As the rebel General Sullivan was preparing to cross from the Jerseys, General Pigot would presently find himself between a fleet and an army, and no time must be lost, if he was to be saved.

Still the winds were contrary, and it was the 9th of August, before the British fleet arrived off the island. There, a galley brings letters from Captain Brisbane, to say that the Frenchmen entered the harbour yesterday, and are now at anchor off Brenton's Reef; that the British frigates have been burned, and the transports sunk, to prevent their falling into the enemy's hands; and that the time Pigot and his garrison can hold out only depends on how many men and guns Sullivan may be able to bring to bear on them.

Captain Digby (who seemed doomed to ride on the seesaw of hope and despair) crawled into his bunk very sadly that night, having heard that the Admiral thought it impracticable to raise the blockade. But next morning he was aroused out of a sound sleep by a general commotion; and, struggling into his coat, and buckling on his sword as he tumbled up on deck, he found that the wind had veered to the N.E., and that the French Admiral seemed to be going to move.

Sure enough, before long the Frenchmen stood out, the huge *Languedoc*, with the Admiral's Broad Pendant flying from her mainmast, and the Royal Standard of France flaunting from her mizzen.

"There are the French lilies!" cries Fred to his friend Lieutenant Wickham, as the smoke of the volley fired by the batteries on Brenton's Point as they pass, clears away. "Oh, how I pity those poor fellows as drew the stay-at-home lots! How they will envy us, to be sure!"

But alas! Captain Digby reckoned without his host. Neptune (perhaps resenting the liberty his self-invited guests were about to take with his domain) so contrived the wind, that that day and the next were spent by the two fleets in a mere contest of seamanship—the British Admiral trying to get the weather-gage, while the Frenchman tried quite as hard to keep it. And when on the evening of the second day, Black Dick resolved to fight whether or no (that is, as Lieutenant Wickham

gravely explained to Digby, *weather-gage* or no), the wind suddenly increasing to a gale, broke up their battle-array, and scattered their navies far and wide.

But though Father Neptune had thus put a stop to the action, the British fleet did not return to New York without firing a few broadsides. After being beaten about for two days, the Commodore fell in towards evening with a Frenchman, who proved to be the *Tonnant*. She had only her mainmast standing—but the *Preston* had but fifty guns to her eighty. The Commodore instantly joined battle, and must have taken her, had not the stormy breezes once more interposed. These, and the coming on of night, obliged the *Preston* to draw off, and early in the morning, part of the French fleet hove in sight, and she could not renew the engagement.

It is needless to say, that during all this time Captain Digby freely cursed the elements, and congratulated himself on belonging to a Service so much less subject to such disappointments, and on having declined the kind offer of a relative to take him into his own ship, if he would go into the Navy. As he observed to Wickham—on land, you can nearly always make the enemy fight, if you've really a mind that he shall. "Though, to be sure," he added parenthetically, "in this confounded war, the rebels seem somehow or other to contrive only to fight when *they've* a mind to. But at sea, you often *can't* fight—not if even both sides have the best will to it in the world. If a storm comes on—why, there you are."

"I wish you was!" groaned Wickham—who had borne up heroically so long as there was the chance of an engagement; but who, when that hope was over, had yielded to the natural weakness of the human stomach, when confronted with angry billows. "I wish you was—that's just where it is—you aint there. You're Lord knows where."

When the scattered squadron had returned to Sandy Hook, Captain Digby derived a certain gloomy satisfaction from comparing his own fate with that of others. Captain Dawson, for instance, in the *Renown*, had fallen in with the huge *Languedoc*, completely dismasted, and had all but made sure of her—when he too was stopped by night and the freshening gale; and in the morning he had been chased by six sail, and thus lost the glory of bringing the French Admiral prisoner into port. And the *Isis* had engaged a seventy-four, supposed to be the *Zèle*, fought her for an hour and a half within pistol-shot range, and

was having much the best of it, when she crowded all sail and escaped.

Meantime, the garrison on Rhode Island were saved from certain destruction. The French fleet had suffered so much in the storm, that their Admiral insisted on going to Boston to refit, and General Sullivan found himself in a very unpleasant predicament. He resolved to retreat before Sir Henry Clinton could come from New York, and did so, without much loss, the very day before Clinton arrived. Captain Digby was with the General, and his disappointment at once more coming just too late was soon after made amends for, by his being appointed aide-de-camp to General Grey, then about to proceed on an expedition against the privateers which infested the eastern coasts.

The autumn and early part of the winter wore away in this and similar expeditions. Captain Ferguson of the 70th destroyed another nest of privateers, at Egg Harbour, in October; and, being detained by contrary winds, and learning—from a French captain who had deserted—that Pulaski's legion kept very careless watch, cut them nearly to pieces in a night-surprise.

Ever since the destruction of Wyoming in July (which consigned Colonel John Butler's name to everlasting infamy), there had been a desultory border-warfare going on in the back country—seldom, however, rising, on the Indian part at least, much above the dignity of murder. General Washington was in camp at Middlebrook; and the rebels, it was reported, were heartily disgusted with the French fashion of helping an ally. There had even been a riot in Boston, and General Sullivan had expressed his own opinion of D'Estaing in an Order of the Day, in terms which had nearly brought about a rupture. On the other hand, Congress had rejected all the overtures of the Commissioners, and it was said that two Quakers had been hanged in Philadelphia.

Two or three letters had reached Fred from his sister, in each one of which she spoke of returning to New York, and to each of which Fred was obliged to reply that his own continuance in that city was very uncertain, and that, all things considered, she had better stay where she was.

He dared not be more explicit—but the fact was that a Southern expedition had been planned, in order, among other objects, to stop the exportation, which was the chief support of the Continental credit. Captain Digby had been promised his

promotion ; but rather than remain longer idle, he accepted a company in one of the light-infantry corps attached to the 71st Highlanders, and sailed for Georgia, with Colonel Campbell—just about the time that his old regiment was on its march for Virginia, whither Congress had finally determined on sending poor Burgoyne's captive army.

A good while before this, Fred received a letter from Mary Fleming, which put him in very low spirits. Mary expressed herself very kindly, and assured him of her regard, but gave him no hope that this regard would ever become a warmer feeling. Poor Fred felt that Fate was using him very ill, and for about a week was in a decided ill-humour with himself and the world.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A HERO'S BRIDE.

HAVING got over the shock of finding her penetration so much at fault, Mrs. Maverick reconciled herself to the situation with a philosophy which surprised Althea. But what good woman was ever long obdurate to a love affair? In a shorter time than could have been expected, she summoned Althea to her side, and bade her not toss her head, but give her a kiss and tell her all about it. As she added that, so far as she was personally concerned, she had no reason to lament what would bring her the comfort of having Althea near her in her declining years, she must be considered as having given her consent very handsomely.

The old lady was further mollified by Althea's artfulness in keeping prominently before her the painful dilemma in which Noel's attachment had placed her.

"I behaved very unkindly," she said—hanging her head, and opening and shutting the scissors, which hung from her waist with her pincushion. "I have owned it to Colonel Fleming. But if it had not been for Noel, we must have understood one another long ago. I'm sure a word from Colonel Fleming would have shown me what I felt——"

"'Tis my belief, child, as you knew what you felt quite long enough ago to have treated him a deal more kindly than you did, as long ago as when he was in Boston. I wish you'd leave off snapping those scissors!"

"I'm sure, cousin," said Althea, with a relapse into her old spirit, "I should never have expected you to approve of it if I had!"

"Tut, tut! child, you know very well that though treason and rebellion are heinous crimes, they aint of the same disgraceful nature as felony. However bitterly I may regret that poor Myra Branhholm's sons should have took the part they have, they can never cease to be gentlemen—and gentlemen, except in that one deplorable particular, of unblemished honour. I could wish for your own sake you had chose Captain André——"

"Captain André was never in earnest."

"You know very well, child, that he only waited for a word from you to make him so. But I don't know what I should have done without you. If you was unkind to poor Colonel Fleming, you've been like a daughter to me;" here Mrs. Maverick shed tears, and pressed Althea's hand. "After all," she went on presently, "you might do worse—everybody speaks very highly of his abilities; and there's to be an act of indemnity, and in a Judge's gown—he's sure to be made a Judge some day—the loss of his arm would hardly be observed."

Mrs. Maverick was soon called upon for another exercise of her philosophy. Peggy Shippen came in one afternoon, with a countenance so evidently adjusted to provoke question, that Althea could do no less than ask what all these reports meant about General Arnold?

To this Peggy replied (after a decent interval of blushes and hesitation), by admitting that the General had made her an offer—in the most beautiful letter that ever was wrote.

"And what does your father say to it, my dear?" asked Mrs. Maverick—who felt, however, that she had now very little right to blame this falling-off.

"He will let me do as I like, of course," says Peggy pertly. "My aunt says he is too old for me—such silly nonsense! I'm sure he is not old at all—he's only six-and-thirty, and that's quite young for a man. And as for his children, I'm sure I shall love them dearly."

From this latter remark it will be seen that Peggy had seriously considered the General's proposal. She went on to remark how shamefully General Arnold had been treated.

"I hate Congress!" says Peggy, stamping her little foot, and clenching her hands. "Congress has used him infamously! There's only General Washington and General Schuyler that

have showed themselves honourable. As for General Gates, every one knows he is a coward! But Congress is the worst!" Having uttered this sweeping denunciation of the rebel authorities, Peggy descanted more at length on the merits and sufferings of General Arnold, who was evidently in her estimation the greatest as well as the bravest of men; and at last took an affectionate leave of the old lady, who had listened to it all with surprising meekness.

"Oh, Althea, don't you think 'tis lovely being in love?" said Peggy, as the two girls went into the sitting-room for a few moments' more confidential talk. "I used to think 'twas rather silly—but then such silly people paid me compliments. Do tell me, Althea—*have* you made it up with Major Branhholm?"

It was well for Peggy that she stopped herself, just as she was going to add that she had told General Arnold she was sure Major Branhholm was unhappy, and that the General had observed that he had himself perceived it, but had felt a delicacy about asking the cause.

Althea only replied, rather stiffly, that she had not made it up with the Major, because she was not aware of ever having quarrelled with him.

Mrs. Branhholm was (after Peggy Shippen) the first visitor that Mrs. Maverick saw. The two ladies had not met for several years—not, indeed, since the political troubles began to seriously threaten the peace of the country. But this only gave them the more to talk about. Mrs. Branhholm confided to Mrs. Maverick her perplexities as to how she could best hope to reconcile her sons; and Mrs. Maverick in return assured her that nothing had ever surprised her so much in the whole course of her existence. In one of these conversations, Mrs. Branhholm told her old friend that (before he went to England) it had been her hope that Noel would marry Mary, and that she had returned to this hope when Miss Digby refused him. But, she added, she feared Mary looked with some favour on a young man who was Noel's particular aversion—and who was, she must say, not half good enough for her, though he belonged to a most respectable family, and there was nothing against him. It is hardly necessary to say that this was that relative of Captain Graydon's, who was always engrossing Mary's attention just when Noel most wanted to talk to her himself. As for Mary, she seemed not unwilling to have him

talk to her, but she never allowed him to positively make love—which he was evidently quite ready to do. Mary had, of course, received Captain Digby's letter; but as she had said nothing about it to any one, and Colonel Fleming was discretion itself in such matters, nobody's suspicions pointed that way.

Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Fleming had removed to Philadelphia, where a part of Mr. Fleming's business lay. The constant disturbances in Boston while the Convention troops were there, and the almost as constant fears of an attack by sea, had determined Mr. Fleming to avail himself of the comparative security of Philadelphia—to which city it was very unlikely the British would ever attempt to return. He took a house accordingly in Pine Street, in which it was said the famous Dr. Christopher Witt had once lived—and in which, if all tales were true, he might yet be met, clad in his long furred gown and pointed cap, and bearing in his hand the ever-burning lamp of the Rosicrucians.

No one, however, was found who professed to have actually beheld Dr. Witt's ghost, and the Flemings had no reason to repent their temerity. Mary, who of course was now with her parents, was observed to be looking a little pale; but she stoutly denied that Dr. Witt had ever intruded upon her and offered to cast her nativity—which was the reason popularly assigned for his posthumous visits.

Mrs. Branhholm and Mary had agreed with Althea that her engagement had better be kept secret for a time, for Noel's sake. This would, they fancied, spare him some of those malapropos comments which there are always to be found persons ready to make. Mary let Noel know this, and he was evidently much relieved to think that he would thus—for a time at least—escape curious looks and impertinent remarks.

Colonel Fleming (who had behaved with great spirit at Monmouth, and been particularly thanked by His Excellency) was most of the autumn at Cambridge, whither he was sent on business connected with the unfortunate death of Lieutenant Brown—shot by a sentinel for persisting in passing the lines—and the quarrel between General Phillips and General Heath which had happened in consequence, and which finally led to the removal of the Convention troops from Boston.

Althea spent the autumn almost in seclusion. There was a good deal of gaiety going on, but her proud spirit chafed at appearing at rebel entertainments. She was engaged to marry

a Colonel in the rebel army, it is true—but that was a different matter altogether. She was not going to marry him, until he should have ceased to be a rebel—that is, until peace should be signed and bygones be bygones. She vexed Peggy Shippen by refusing to go to the grand ball which Governor Arnold gave the French Embassy, and to which all the ladies of the *Mischianza* were invited—to the scandal of some of the stiff old Whigs. But there were not young ladies enough in Philadelphia for a round dozen of the prettiest to be left out of the invitations, so they all went and danced their best, in spite of General Reed's chilly looks.

Althea saw Noel not long after his return; but they met in the presence of half-a-dozen people, and the interview was further made easy by Major Branhholm's using the opportunity to give her a letter which had come by the post-rider from Captain Digby, and, like all other letters, had been stopped at the outpost.

Fred's letter contained a very guarded account of events since the army left Philadelphia. Indeed, except as a proof that he was alive and well, it told her considerably less than she and everybody else knew already.

At this interview, Althea perceived a great change in Noel's manner. He was much graver than usual, and somewhat more ceremonious. He seemed to wish to put a distance between them; and Althea felt that he was right.

Althea had long since told Mary very nearly all that there was to tell, and as she did not absolutely swear her friend to secrecy, a considerable portion of the story had been imparted to Noel. He had heard it almost in silence, only saying at the end,—

“I never doubted Jasper's honour; but a wound is a wound, whoever gives it.”

As autumn wore on, and the army went into winter quarters at Middlebrook, Mrs. Branhholm resolved to accompany her husband (who had been nearly a month with her in Philadelphia) to the camp. Althea missed her very much, and did not feel that Mrs. Lawrence Fleming's visits, paid and returned, were a compensation. Mrs. Fleming had not yet been informed of Althea's engagement, and the consequent failure of her plans for Jasper, but after a visit to her Althea always went home very despondent, and wishing herself back in England,

until she remembered how little she had there to go back to. After such visits, she generally consoled herself by writing to Jasper—but she was constantly checked by the knowledge that her letter might, and very likely would, be read by other eyes before it reached his, and might perhaps never reach him at all.

About this time, the rancour already existing between the two contending parties assumed an extraordinary and frightful intensity. The slaughter of Wyoming was the first of a long series of partisan massacres, where neighbour fought with neighbour, brother with brother, and even father with son—till hell itself seemed to have broken loose. Walter Butler, whom General Arnold had spared at German Flats, ravaged Cherry Valley. Tories leagued themselves with Indians, and provoked terrible reprisals; while in the Carolinas, Whigs and Tories hung each other on the nearest tree.

A good many people found themselves in an awkward dilemma, after the British army had gone. Those who had rendered themselves particularly obnoxious to the incoming powers, mostly departed with the outgoing ones; but some remained—and against these, bills for treason were sent to the Grand Jury. Many of these bills were thrown out, and of those which came on to be tried, only two resulted in a conviction. It was pretty well known that the great body of the Quakers inclined to the Royal cause—though they usually confined their opposition to the part whereof it is said, “He that is not with us is against us.” It was therefore all the greater shock, to see two Quakers brought to the gallows for aiding and abetting the enemy. One of these unlucky persons was that same Roberts who had once rebuked Colonel Fleming’s unsanctified zeal. He had been caught trying to enlist recruits for Sir William Howe—and had even strayed so far from the path of non-resistance, as to offer to put himself at the head of a troop of horse, and rescue those Quaker-citizens who, a year ago, had been sent to Virginia, to remove them out of the way of temptation.

In spite of all the efforts made to save him, Roberts was hanged on the Commons; and if it could not be said that he had lived like a Friend, he at least died like a man, and made his dying speech with a coolness worthy of a more consistent career.

With these exceptions, however (and some discontent at the high prices of necessaries), Philadelphia was almost as peaceful

as usual, and much less dull. General Arnold, who had the same house—once Governor Penn's—which Sir William Howe had occupied, kept up a good deal of state. He had entertained the French ambassador and his suite for several days; and there were persons who asked if so much magnificence comported with republican simplicity and a time of distress? These persons also professed themselves scandalised at the court which the General paid to Mr. Shippen—a notorious loyalist, and to Mr. Shippen's daughter—who had flaunted it at the *Mischianza*.

Some of these reports reached the Governor, and highly incensed him.

"Do they expect me to make war on women?" he said angrily to Major Branhholm. "Was you not sick yesterday at Reed's speech against young Will Hamilton? Who would have thought, to hear him, that the virtuous Joseph was once, and not two years ago yet, thinking of making his own peace? I wish to heaven Cadwallader had called *him* out instead of Conway! I'm no friend of Conway's, as you know, nor of any other of General Gates's creatures—but Conway did at least stand before Washington's face to what he'd said behind his back. But Reed has contrived to sail so near the wind, that, but for that damning letter to Lee, we should never have been quite sure he was not a true man."

"That is a hard thing to say, sir, of a man who perhaps at the worst was only guilty of a momentary weakness," observed Noel.

"'Twas no momentary weakness," said the General. "He is one of those of whom 'tis said in Scripture, that they turn aside like a broken bow. And now, forsooth, he says that the King of England is too poor to buy him—and on the wings of that saying will soar to immortality!"

CHAPTER XXV.

TOBIAS SEES THE NEW YEAR COME TO TOWN.

THE winter set in exceedingly cold, but Mrs. Maverick's health and spirits returned surprisingly as the weather grew more severe—until, as Christmas approached, she was almost herself again. It was a sore trial to her loyalty to be obliged to hear so much of General Arnold, President Reed, and Congress; and

when General Washington came to town in December, it was impossible to walk the streets without (metaphorically speaking, of course) running against a rebel officer. Mrs. Maverick's only consolations were derived from the reflection, that in Boston she must have been still more afflicted by the sight of Burgoyne's unfortunate army, and by the spectacle of a French fleet riding in the Bay—while another terrible fire in New York, and the frequent expectation of an attack, did not make that city a very desirable place of abode. But perhaps the dissensions in Congress, and the accounts of the squabbles among the French Commissioners (who were writing pamphlets and letters against each other as hard as they could), cheered the poor lady still more. Did not Scripture say plainly that a kingdom divided against itself could not stand?

Although, of course, this winter could not pretend to compare with the last, Philadelphia was tolerably gay. It was said, indeed, that General Washington had been much scandalised at the sums of money—sometimes as much as three or four hundred pounds—willingly spent on an assembly or a supper, while the soldiers had not shoes to their feet or shirts to their backs, and the Jersey regiments were clamouring for their pay. He had said that this was not a time for junketing, and had declined to appear at any of these costly entertainments. But, though General Washington could keep an army together on no pay and hardly anything to eat, he could not stop the Philadelphians from giving parties.

It was now the last day of the old year, and Mr. Shippen had invited all his friends to see the old year out. In old Philadelphia, everybody who was anybody knew everybody else, so the day fixed for an entertainment was usually matter of friendly arrangement. This evening, for instance, the Chews had thought of giving a party themselves, but had been persuaded to defer theirs till Twelfth Night. Mr. Justice Chew (who had been banished to his estate in New Jersey a little before the British army entered Philadelphia) had been permitted to return, to the great joy of his family. Mr. Shippen, however, had only a few days ago married his daughter Betsy to Colonel Burd, and this party was to be a sort of wind-up of the marriage-festivities.

Mr. Shippen insisted that Mrs. Maverick should come, and the bride sent word she should take it very unkind if she did not. As there was a deep snow on the ground, Mr. Shippen

sent his own chair for Mrs. Maverick, and Althea, as she gave one last look in her glass, heard the chairmen stamping the snow off their feet at the front door. Althea was in good spirits. Fred had gone south, but he had written that by all accounts they should find more friends than enemies in Georgia and the Carolinas. And Colonel Fleming was expected to pass through town in a very few days—indeed he might arrive at any time. The Convention troops were to be removed to Virginia, and he was to accompany them.

The hope of seeing Jasper so soon brought Althea such a sense of complete rest and peace that—though she was resolved to keep her word—she secretly regretted the necessity of waiting till the war was over, before she could marry him. Many of the officers had their wives with them, even in camp; she could easily have gone to Virginia—

“Pshaw!” cried Althea to her image in the looking-glass, which blushed furiously. “What sort of principles can you have, to think of such a thing? Where’s your patriotism! Think of your brother—fighting for his King this very moment perhaps—and be ashamed of yourself!”

“The chair’s come back—’tis your turn,” said Tobias, tugging at Althea’s brocade to make her attend. “Are you angry because you think you don’t look well?” he added, trying to get a peep in the glass himself. “Because *I* think you look well enough.”

The chairmen whisked Althea round to Fourth Street in a very few minutes, and quite as soon as Mrs. Maverick had fairly shaken out her skirts.

As Althea went up the broad stair of the Shippen House, she could not but remember that the last public entertainment at which she had been present was the splendid festival of the Mischianza. The old Shippen House, however, had a sober magnificence of its own, which compensated in Althea’s mind for the greater size and more gaudy decorations of the supper-room at Walnut-Grove.

The rooms were already crowded, and there was quite a throng round the bride and bridegroom. Peggy Chew soon made her way to Althea, and began to talk about the Mischianza, and said she wished Captain André could be spirited thither for that one night—just to see how well they could get on without him. “Though, for that matter,” added Miss Chew ingenuously, “I don’t mind owning as I miss the British officers

dreadful. Do you remember Captain André's face, Althea, the night Polly Redman sang *War and Washington*? How he shifted about, not quite sure if he ought to laugh at such a defiance—and then ended by laughing as loud as anybody! But here's my brother Ben, looking as spruce as if he had just stepped down out of a picture-frame, come to ask you to dance."

Mrs. Maverick had vanished — having been instantly disposed of in the card-room by Mr. Shippen, who had not ventured to tell her that General Arnold was to be present, and was glad to get her out of the way of seeing the rebel Governor. Instead of the General, however, Major Branzholm appeared rather late in the evening, with excuses—the General, whose leg obstinately refused to heal, was in more pain than usual, and felt himself too ill to come.

At this, there was a universal expression of sympathy, and Peggy Shippen's eyes filled with tears. She said something in a low voice to the Major, which was probably a message—for Major Branzholm had intimated that the General had desired him to return and sit with him. He whispered to Miss Shippen that the General felt very low, but had particularly enjoined him to wish her from him a Happy New Year—at which Peggy's eyes fairly overflowed, and several of the guests whispered to each other that 'twas pretty clear there would soon be another wedding in that house.

This threw a sort of damper on the company, and to remove it, the host called for a song. In those days, there was a great deal of singing in a simple way in Philadelphia—generally without music—though many of the ladies twanged the guitar. Althea had sung once or twice last winter at Mr. Shippen's and the Chews', and now nothing would do but she must give them one of Dr. Arne's songs from Shakespeare. So she sang *Under the greenwood tree*, accompanying herself on Peggy's guitar, in a way which produced a prodigious effect. Althea's voice was a good mezzo-soprano, with something of a contralto quality about the lower notes; and as she had had the advantage of singing-lessons in Bath, there was a finish in her style which her audience highly appreciated, and preferred even to Mary Fleming's sweet high soprano, as clear as a silver bell, in which she warbled an *aria* of the great Mr. Handel's.

With music and dancing the night wore on, until it was past eleven. The whist-players had left their tables (all but Dr. Chevet and a few of the more inveterate gamblers) and crowded

into the large drawing-room. And just at this moment, Peggy Shippen, who was very much excited, and looked even lovelier than usual, insisted on Althea's singing a little song which she had found one day among her music, and had borrowed to copy. "If you'll sing it, I won't tell 'tis your own composing," whispers Peggy. "Here it is—come, I'm sure you can't have forgot it."

Althea had never intended to sing this particular song in public, but, lest Peggy should proclaim her as its author, she complied without more ado, and playing a few bars of a very simple prelude, began—

"A lady looked from her castle-wall ;
The shadows of eve began to fall
On turret and battlement hoar.
She heard the wind in the cedar trees,
And fancied it murmured words like these—

*' Return, return, from over the seas,
And go to the wars no more !
Return ! Return ! '*

"The stream ran murmuring down the vale ;
On a bush close by the nightingale
His complaint to the moon did pour.
The lady sighed, her heart to ease—
And still she fancied the words were these—

*' Return, return, from over the seas,
And go to the wars no more !
Return ! Return ! '*

"Her lord was gone far over the brine,
To fight for the Cross in Palestine,
And Solyma's towers restore ;
And still she fancied that words like these
Were sung by the brook and the summer breeze—

*' Return, return, from over the seas,
And go to the wars no more !
Return ! Return ! '*

Althea had made this little song long ago in England, when she first thought of following the marching-regiment, to the mortal offence of old Mrs. Theodosia. She sang it now with a great deal of feeling, and let her voice die away very sweetly in the refrain—as though the murmuring brook had indeed taken it up, and was sighing out, "Return ! return !" as it hurried impatiently down the valley. Mary was so engrossed in the song, and in watching Althea, that she did not observe a slight commotion near the card-room door. But as Althea was sing-

ing the last verse—her voice lingering tenderly over the refrain—the door leading to the card-room was pushed a little open, and Mary saw Jasper. Althea saw him too, and faltered in the last “Return,” but recovered herself, and played the closing bars. Then she unloosed the guitar-ribbon from her neck—disregarding many entreaties to sing again—and, crossing over to Mary, whispered to her that Jasper was arrived.

He came up as soon as he could get to them—as nearly every one present knew him, this, however, took some time. He had scarcely asked Althea how she did (with a look which asked a good deal more), when the guests all began to crowd down into the hall, for the clocks were on the stroke of midnight. Some of the young men (among them that cousin of Captain Graydon’s, whom Noel had lately thought a more consummate coxcomb than ever) ran out in the snow, to listen for the bells of Christ Church. It was not very light in the hall, and no one but Mary noticed that Colonel Fleming held Miss Digby’s hand, all the while the bells were ringing the Old Year out and the New Year in. And what was more natural than that the Colonel should escort Miss Digby home? The chairmen had enough to do; and the snow was crisp and dry. It was also perfectly natural that Tobias should wish to see the New Year arrive, and that his mother should tell him he would have a whole twelvemonth to see it in, and send him off to bed at his usual hour—and also that he should, in spite of a determination to keep awake, fall fast asleep, and only be wakened by the chairmen who brought Mrs. Maverick home violently ringing the bell. Thinking that this might be the New Year, Tobias jumped instantly out of bed, got on the chair by the window, and thence on to the table—in his haste knocking over a small swing-glass which stood on it. Luckily the glass only fell on its back and was not broken, but Tobias thought the noise would bring some one, and listened anxiously; but no one came, and he took courage to open the window. It was very cold, and Tobias’s teeth presently began to chatter furiously; but he could see everything that was going on down below—even the deep holes in the snow made by the chairmen’s feet. They were just bringing the chair down the steps, having, no doubt, carried Mrs. Maverick or Miss Digby—whichever it was they had brought—into the passage. Once down the steps, they hitched their hands to the ends of the poles, and set off at

a run with the empty chair, as if it had been a pumpkin. Tobias knew the chair again—it was the yellow one. He watched them to the corner, and then was just going to draw in his head (as the air was uncommonly sharp), when he saw a lady and gentleman coming along on the other side of the street. He instantly recognised the lady by her muffler and hood—it was Miss Digby; and the gentleman, no doubt, was Major Branhholm, for he wore a cocked hat, and Tobias could see his sword sticking out from under his cloak.

The sky was clear, and the moon, though past the full, shone very bright. Tobias could see that both Miss Digby's hands were clasped over the gentleman's arm, and that she was looking in his face. He had heard Miss Digby discussed in the kitchen in connection with Major Branhholm. His curiosity had been tremendously excited by the mystery which Betty Cook threw around love affairs in general, and the mixture of lofty contempt and secret gloating with which he had seen her listen to the whispered confidences of her own female friends. Tobias had heard much of love-making, but had seen little. So far as his own observation had yet gone, the operation appeared to chiefly consist of a box on the ear. This primitive method of making love was, however, vastly entertaining to witness, and Tobias cautiously put out his head a little farther, so as to lose none of it, in case there should be any.

Miss Digby and the gentleman were now crossing the street; the gentleman's head was slightly bent, and his hat so shadowed his face that Tobias could not make out his features, but the moon shone full in Miss Digby's face—it was she, beyond a doubt. The gentleman seemed to say something, at which Miss Digby stroked his hand—so, at least, the action appeared to Tobias. It certainly did not look like a slap. But more was to come.

Miss Digby and her cavalier made straight for the house and mounted the steps, but, once arrived there, Miss Digby did not open the door and go in, as Tobias of course expected she would do. On the contrary, she stood there talking to the gentleman—while Tobias's teeth rattled in his jaws, and his fingers, as he held on by the window-sill, ached with cold. Tobias could only hear a murmur of voices, but he could see the speakers very well; and presently he saw the gentleman take off his hat—upon which, to his inexpressible amazement, Tobias discovered that it was not Major Branhholm, who was

very dark, while this gentleman seemed to be rather fair. Scarcely had he made this discovery, when he was subjected to a second surprise. The gentleman kissed Miss Digby—and instead of boxing his ears (as Betty Cook did the other day to the barber's boy), or screaming and running away, she stood perfectly still, and allowed him to do it again!

At the risk of his neck, Tobias craned out another inch. Yes! he was kissing her again; and instead of pushing him down the steps—as, for an instant, Tobias thought she was going to do—she laid her hands on his shoulders, and presently slipped one arm round his neck, and laid down her head on his breast!

At this spectacle, all sorts of wild and contradictory thoughts rushed pell-mell into Tobias's mind. If Betty Cook had boxed the ears of the barber's boy once, she had done it a dozen times; only the other day there had been a grand tussle, in which a chair had been upset, and the barber's boy had only just managed to snatch a kiss, after spilling his flour-bag all over Betty's back and tearing her gown. Was Betty a hypocrite? And was the barber's boy in league with her? Betty always said Miss Digby was a proud madam—why, then, did she not box the stranger's ears? Had not Betty once told him, in answer to his question as to why she boxed the barber's boy, that she did it out of a proper pride?

At last, they seemed to say good-night. Miss Digby opened the door, and a pale gleam from the candle in the passage fell out on the snow. Miss Digby cried, "Good-night!" the gentleman bowed very politely, and, after standing still a moment in the middle of the road, walked quickly away in the opposite direction to that in which he had come. Tobias watched him as long as he was in sight, and then, closing the window, crept back to bed, chilled to his very marrow, perplexed in the inmost recesses of his soul, but so triumphant at his adventure, that he quite forgot all about the New Year, until next morning.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WHICH TOBIAS RECEIVES A SHOCK TO HIS MORALS.

MRS. MAVERICK observed at breakfast-time, that she should not wonder but what Colonel Fleming would call before dinner,

and they had best be ready. Now that she actually lived in a city governed by rebel authorities, Mrs. Maverick yielded to circumstances so far as to give Mr. Fleming his military rank in speaking of him.

The Colonel made his appearance a very long while before dinner; it was, in fact, not so very long after breakfast. He brought a pressing invitation for the ladies to return and dine with his uncle and aunt. Mrs. Maverick was expecting two old friends of her own to dinner, but she instantly accepted the invitation for Althea, without so much as asking her whether she chose to go.

"I suppose you know, Colonel Fleming," she said, fixing her bright eyes on Jasper in a very embarrassing manner, "that Althea has confided to me the march you have stole on us?"

"Really, my dear Madam, I do not think my conduct deserves so hard a name," said Jasper, in a tone of remonstrance. Mrs. Maverick shook her head and her finger at him.

"I think," she said, still transfixing him—her eyes were still a most effective pair of weapons, and must have been irresistible in her youth—"that you have, both of you, been monstrous sly. All's fair, they say, in love and war; but I, for one, was completely deceived. If you had asked me if I thought you was indifferent to Althea, I should have told you I believed she had a particular antipathy towards you."

To this the Colonel gravely replied that such had long been his own opinion.

"Though why, if 'twas not so," continued the old lady, looking amazingly sagacious, "she behaved to you as she did—or why, if 'twas so—as, in spite of everything she says, I'm inclined to believe—she changed her opinion of you so completely, is more nor I can fathom."

"I think, Madam," said Jasper, with a sly glance at Althea, who blushed furiously, "that she took me on the same principle as that on which the ancient Romans at last accepted the Sibylline Books."

"Ah, now you're classical, Colonel, I can't follow you," observed Mrs. Maverick. "I'm sure, Althea, I don't know why you laugh. Well, I have some little matters to attend to, and will leave you for a few minutes. I suppose nobody dines before two o'clock to-day."

As soon as Mrs. Maverick had thus considerably left the

lovers alone, Jasper drew his chair close to Althea's, and, taking her hand, said,—

"'Tis indeed happiness, Althea, to begin this New Year with you."

She smiled, but sighed next moment, as she asked anxiously, "Have you seen Noel yet? Will he be at your uncle's to-day?"

"He sent word he must be in attendance on General Arnold till five or six o'clock this evening."

Then, seeing that Althea looked much troubled, he exclaimed almost angrily—"What can I do? I have not wronged him! I never wooed you—I allowed you, as I believed, to detest me—for his sake! I've wrote to him, and he has not replied. What more can I do or say? I cannot ask his pardon for being beloved by you—though, by Heaven! I love him so, that I'm almost ready to do it! I wrote him what I thought must move him, but he has not answered by so much as a single word! I've done no wrong; I cannot abase myself before him! And other satisfaction is out of the question between brothers."

Jasper was impatiently walking about the room as he said this. Just as he mentioned "satisfaction," his sword fell down with a clash by the table, against which he had propped it when he laid it aside. Althea turned pale.

"*Absit omen!*" he said almost lightly, as he picked up the sword. "Do not be afraid, I shall never draw it against Noel. I should not have said what I did—I've not the least reason to suppose so mad an idea ever crossed the boy's mind. But this silence is so strange—so unlike him. And until we are reconciled, even you cannot make me completely happy. Does that seem cold and unkind, Althea?"

Jasper accompanied this question with so tender an embrace, that a more exacting mistress could hardly have thought him cold.

"No!" she said, with a generous passion which brought back the colour to her cheeks; "you would be less than I think you if you felt otherwise. I can rise higher than you think—I can honour your motives, when I most regret your conclusions. I should be base indeed, if I could be insensible to a quarrel of which I am the unhappy cause. I sometimes wonder, Jasper, that you don't hate me—I've brought you nothing but pain. I'm justly punished for all my wicked pride——"

But Jasper would not let her reproach herself—fate was, he declared, at least as much to blame as she—indeed, he would not hear of her being to blame at all. The kinder she had shown herself, the harder would she have made his own task.

"Though, after all," he said, looking at her with great tenderness, "your unkindness only showed itself in words; I remember a thousand kind actions to set against them. And 'twas I that provoked your unkindness half the time; but I did it, because I durst not trust myself. But 'twas of no use—there was ever such a magnanimity about you as left me more hopelessly in love than ever—even when you'd just hurt me most."

"And now," she said, the tears in her eyes, "when I would if I could make up for it all, I am come between you and Noel. But 'tis a judgement on me!"

"If we could but meet, I'm certain 'twould all be well," said Jasper. "And I do not believe he will let to-day pass without seeing me."

As nothing could make Mrs. Maverick forget to be hospitable, she reappeared after a reasonable interval, with some hot metheglin, which Colonel Fleming was compelled to swallow. This comparatively trifling circumstance would not have been mentioned, but for the extraordinary conduct of Tobias, who had earnestly entreated to be allowed to carry the cake-basket. A cloak which Tobias had just beheld in the hall had vividly reminded him of a most interesting episode, of which he had been an unsuspected witness the night before. Furthermore, the first objects which he noticed on entering the parlour were a cocked hat and a sword—the next was Colonel Fleming, standing with his back to the stove, and looking down on Miss Digby, who was sitting quite near, and looking up at him in return, as composed as possible. Although Tobias had been able to make out that Miss Digby's audacious cavalier was not Major Branhholm (as it ought to have been), he would not have recognised him in the Colonel but for these adjuncts. As it was, the law of association of ideas instantly suggested to him that the mysterious stranger had worn a laced hat, a cloak, and a sword, and—being entirely ignorant of what a *non sequitur* is—he instantly jumped to the conclusion that this could be no other than the mysterious stranger himself.

The effect of this conclusion on Tobias was so marked that

it attracted everybody's attention. He advanced very slowly towards the Colonel, with eyes as round as marbles, and a mouth which he had opened in the first moment of surprise and forgotten to shut again—mechanically extending the cake-basket the while, but with so little discrimination, that Mrs. Maverick thought he would thrust it bodily into the stove.

"Bless me, what is the child about?" she exclaimed, seizing Tobias by the collar, and taking the cake-basket out of his hand. Tobias (who was evidently labouring under a severe cold in the head) continued to gaze at the Colonel with watery eyes, in which the prevailing expression was sheer amazement—nor could even the Colonel's presenting him with half a silver dollar permanently distract his attention.

Tobias remembered perfectly well having seen Colonel Fleming just before the Britishers went away. He had then been deeply, not to say solemnly, impressed by the fact (as narrated with a dreadful zest by Betty Cook, who took the phrase in its literal sense) that the Colonel had had his arm shot off by a cannon-ball in the wars. But the interest which Tobias now felt in him was hardly less thrilling, if more domestic, in its nature. He had reason to believe that Miss Digby (for whom he cherished a romantic but Platonic admiration himself) was in love with Colonel Fleming, instead of—as everybody else believed—with Major Branzholm.

Being a strictly brought-up little boy, Tobias's morals suffered a distinct deterioration in consequence of this discovery; he began from that very day to entertain insidious doubts on the whole subject of love-making, and especially on that particular article of the code on which Betty Cook was so fond of insisting—to wit, that a blow was the proper return for a kiss. Colonel Fleming—invested with the awful dignity of a uniform, and the yet more fearful fascination of having come into actual personal collision with cannon-balls, with a pervading atmosphere of gun-powder about him, and his sword lying on the table, ready to administer martial law—was of course not to be compared too closely with the barber's boy—yet Tobias had heard Betty mysteriously remark, *apropos* of nothing, that if it came to that, we was all much alike. The Dutch mind is somewhat slow; but by the time Tobias was seventeen, he had deduced from all these premises the astounding conclusion, that Miss Digby had been rather pleased than otherwise that Colonel Fleming had kissed her—on the strength of which theory, he

kissed three girls in a single week, and had his ears soundly boxed by two of them for his pains. This is a digression, and is merely inserted here by way of a warning to lovers to remember that there are attic-windows, and to kiss round the corner.

Meanwhile, Tobias firmly closed one fist upon the Colonel's present, and continued to regard him with solemn attention. Miss Digby (who was much amused) got up from her chair for a moment, and, laying her hand on the Colonel's arm, whispered something in his ear, at which he laughed, and looked at Tobias.

"Come here, Tobias," he said, sitting down next to Miss Digby; "come and tell me how old you are."

Tobias mechanically advanced—so astonished at seeing Miss Digby on these affectionate terms with a gentleman who had presumed to kiss her no longer ago than last night, that he did not look where he was going, and, tripping over Colonel Fleming's foot, would have lost his balance altogether, had not the Colonel caught him and propped him up against his knee.

"He really is a most awkward child," observed Mrs. Maverick. "One day, while I was sick, he fell downstairs—all from not looking where he was going—and frightened me nearly to pieces."

"Well, how old are you, Tobias?" asks the Colonel. By this time, Tobias had steadied himself, and was gazing intently at the Colonel's empty sleeve, which he wore neatly fastened to a button of his coat.

"I'm nine—I mean I'm ten," he replied—wondering how a cannon-ball felt, and thinking with some disappointment that the Colonel did not look any fiercer than other people. "Least-ways, it's next 'ear now, aint it?" he added, looking up boldly into the Colonel's face, having suddenly got over his constitutional diffidence.

"That is a difficult question, Tobias," answered the Colonel, with a gravity which did not prevent Tobias from perceiving that he was being made fun of somehow or other. "Doctors differ upon it. But if you were to be ten next year, this is the year you mean."

"Then I'm ten," said Tobias with decision, feeling at least an inch taller. Then a happy idea struck him, and he asked confidentially,—

"Did you see the Noo 'ear come in?"

Colonel Fleming replied that he did.

"Did you ever see him afore?" asked Tobias.

"Never so well as last night," replied the Colonel gravely. Miss Digby went very red.

"What was he like?" asked Tobias, his now unabashed gaze roving from the Colonel to Miss Digby, and back again from Miss Digby to the Colonel, in a way calculated to disconcert nervous persons.

"He was like a traveller," said Miss Digby, entering into the jest—perhaps to cover a little confusion. "He was all muffled up in a great cloak, with snow on it—and his hat came down over his eyes, so that you could not see what his face was like——"

"Was it a laced hat?" asked Tobias, his eyes growing rounder than ever. "Had he got a sword?" As he asked this latter question, Tobias glanced at Colonel Fleming's own sword, as it lay on the table.

"I'll be bound he had," said Mrs. Maverick, who believed, good lady, that she was helping bamboozle Tobias. "A sword very like that one you see."

But Tobias did not pay much attention to Mrs. Maverick—he knew she had come home first, and he did not believe she had seen the mysterious arrival at all. He shook the Colonel gently by the knee to make him listen—he was looking at Miss Digby, and they both seemed to be laughing at something.

"Do Noo 'ears ever have anybody with 'em?" he asked, when he thus gained the Colonel's attention. "Any ladies?"

"The little imp!" thought Miss Digby. But Tobias put his question in all good faith; he was by this time half-persuaded that it might have been the New Year after all, and only desired a little further proof.

The Colonel replied that he had never heard of such a thing, but it might be so for all that; new things happen every day, and philosophers teach us that nothing is impossible—

At this moment, Tobias was still further perplexed, by observing on Colonel Fleming's little finger a ring which he was positive Miss Digby used to wear before the Britishers went away.

"I think," says Miss Digby hastily—perceiving several other questions lurking in Tobias's eye—"that 'tis time I got ready. We must not keep Mr. and Mrs. Fleming waiting dinner—that is, if I am to go, cousin——"

"Of course you are to go, my dear," says Mrs. Maverick. "Phoebe will help you dress, if you like to call her—I will

entertain Colonel Fleming till you are ready. You had better take Tobias away with you, he is getting troublesome." Miss Digby accordingly led Tobias to the door (he had to be forcibly detached from the Colonel's knee, and was very loth to depart), and saw him safe on his journey down to his mother. She was a remarkably short time getting ready, and she came out of her room so quickly, that she very nearly knocked down Tobias, who had crept softly up again to waylay her.

"I wanted to arst you something," he said—his thumb in his mouth, and his head apparently glued to his right shoulder—in answer to Althea's demand of what he was doing there.

Being slightly embarrassed, Tobias hereupon thrust his thumb a little too far down his throat, and very nearly swallowed it.

"Well—what is it? Be quick, Tobias! I'm going out to dinner," says Althea, drawing on her glove.

"Was it Colonel Fleming as kissed you last night?" asked Tobias with do-or-die desperation in his tone. "I promise you I won't tell Betty Cook, if you'll only tell me. I don't b'lieve 'twas the Noo 'ear—though they said as he'd come at twelve o'clock. Was it Colonel Fleming? and why wasn't you angry with him?" Tobias gasped for breath—he had never spoken so fast in his life.

"Tobias," replied Miss Digby, with severe serenity, "little boys should never ask questions—that is, improper questions, about things they don't understand. I'm not angry with you," for Tobias seemed about to burst into tears; "but I've no time to talk to you now—I can't keep Colonel Fleming waiting." So saying, she stooped and kissed him—much more kindly than the imp deserved—and ran down to tell the Colonel she was ready. Tobias watched them (from Miss Digby's window) till they were out of sight; they were talking to each other all the way—evidently, Betty Cook's philosophy would not hold water. Tobias sadly concluded that he must reconstruct his universe.

Mr. Fleming (who did not look a day older) received Althea very affectionately, and requested permission to salute her—to accomplish which, however, he had to raise himself on tiptoe. Mrs. Fleming was equally kind in her own way—indeed, the manner in which her husband and daughter had taken the announcement, had surprised her into at least a temporary

acquiescence; but as she considered it a religious obligation to take a serious view of all human affairs, it was with an audible sigh that she wished Miss Digby a Happy New Year—"As happy, that is," she explained, lest this conventional phrase should sound too frivolous, "as we can expect."

Mary informed Althea, while she was divesting herself of her walking attire, that Noel had been asked to meet his brother, but had excused himself—on the plea of its being impossible for any of the General's family to be absent on New Year's Day.

"I have no doubt that is the truth," said Althea. But Mary replied that he could at least have snatched an hour to come and see Jasper, and that she thought this sullen silence very unkind and very unlike him, and added that it made her very unhappy.

"'Twill come right, dearest Mary, 'twill come right," said Althea, embracing her affectionately. "Noel is too generous himself to resist Jasper's appeal to him much longer."

"He has let six months go by," said Mary, very sorrowfully.

"You must pardon the informality of the invitation, my dear," said Mr. Fleming, when Althea came into the dining-parlour—where, however, no one ever did dine, even on New Year's Day, and which was always kept as a company-room. "It was only last night Jasper informed us of his good fortune—and I said instantly, 'Then she and Mrs. Maverick must come and eat their New Year's dinner with us!' He'd have told me before," he whispered mysteriously, "but I daresay as you can guess——" The old gentleman—who was dressed for the occasion in a claret-coloured velvet coat, with a canary waistcoat and claret continuations, in which costume he much resembled a yellow-breasted bird—glanced round to see where Jasper was, observed mysteriously that they had agreed not to say anything about it, and proceeded to descant on Jasper's merits, to which Miss Digby listened with much sweetness. Indeed, her whole bearing was so gentle and yielding that Fred would have beheld her with nearly as much bewilderment as the apparition of Colonel Fleming had lately produced in Tobias.

"Even you, my dear, cannot know all he is," said the old gentleman confidentially to Althea, in a pause between the courses. And Althea won his heart for ever, by replying that she hoped to have a long time in which to learn it.

"Ah, my dear, I trust you may—I trust you may!" he said, patting her hand—she sat between him and Jasper. "But these are sad times, sad times! When I heard he was dead, I thought my heart would have broke." Here Mr. Fleming looked at Jasper, and shook his head. "Don't let him hear we're talking about him," he whispered, "he don't like it. Some other time, when he aint by——"

But Jasper, who had observed a good deal of pantomimic communication being carried on, here interposed. He was afraid that Noel was the subject of conversation. "My dear father," he said, "you promised me that only cheerful subjects should be talked of to-day. I don't want to know what you have been saying—whatever it is, it has brought the tears to both your eyes. I am sure you was going to drink Althea's health——"

"To be sure, to be sure, my dear Jasper," cries the old gentleman, instantly filling his glass. "But we wasn't talking of the subjects you said wasn't to be mentioned. My dear, pass the bottle to Jasper."

Mr. Fleming proposed Althea's health in a very neat set speech; and for the remainder of dinner-time contented himself with exchanging nods and winks of intelligence with her.

After dinner—which went off very cheerfully upon the whole—although Mrs. Fleming unnecessarily reminded the company that they might not all be spared to see another New Year's Day, and Mary could not help listening for Noel—they returned to the state-apartment.

"We'd a deal better have stopped below!" cried Mr. Fleming, violently attacking the stove-fire with the poker. "I hate a company-room, it always gives me cold. Your mother would have us come up here, in honour of Miss Althea—who I'm sure has more sense nor to like to sit shivering in a company-room, when she might stop in a comfortable parlour. For my part, Jasper, if Dr. Witt was such a conjurer as they say he was, I wonder he didn't invent a better stove nor this, which roasts you in front all the while you're freezing behind. I'll have a Franklin put in—Dr. Franklin has more common sense in his little finger, nor most folks have gotten in their whole bodies—present company of course excepted."

This conventional disclaimer notwithstanding, this speech with the reference to Dr. Franklin, was, I regret to say, intended as a dig at Mrs. Fleming, for having insisted on sitting

upstairs in state; and it drew a remark from that excellent lady to the effect that common-sense might be very well in its proper place (which might or might not be a fireplace), but that in many more important matters Dr. Franklin was very far indeed from being infallible.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON THE ROAD TO GERMANTOWN.

GENERAL ARNOLD was not much in the habit of talking of his future plans. Even with Major Braxholm (popularly believed to be in his confidence) he seldom discussed anything but the matter immediately in hand.

On New Year's Eve, however, he was in an unusually open mood. Having minutely inquired as to how Peggy had received his message, he launched out into abuse, pretty evenly distributed between Congress and the Executive Council of Pennsylvania. The injustice, the meddling, the base ingratitude of Congress, were themes on which the General had often enlarged before; but it is only just to say that his indignation was not alone excited by his own wrongs. In spite of all his efforts to move Congress, the orphan children of Dr. Warren were still unprovided for, and Congress was permitting the lady who was to have been their second mother to bring them up at her own expense—assisted more than once by General Arnold himself—while it heaped honours on needy foreign adventurers, who had come to fish in troubled waters. One had only to plot against Washington, to be instantly made a Major-General, continued the General; and as for the Executive Council of Pennsylvania, the only part of its business which it thoroughly understood, was how to thwart and hamper the military authorities—to which, in the very nature of things, it ought to be subordinate.

This supremacy of the military authority was so sore a point, that Noel was relieved when the General, growing less angry but more despondent, began to talk of his wound, and of the helpless condition to which it reduced him.

"I am a useless log," he groaned, "I cannot so much as mount a horse. I have been thinking whether 'twould not be best to make a grace of necessity. I've thought, if I could

get a grant of land somewhere in the west of New York, I might establish a settlement there. There are many broken-down soldiers as have served under me, that I think would gladly go with me. I might live like Schuyler—a patriarch with flocks and herds. I think I might there retrieve my broken fortunes, and heal me of my wounds, and be able to snap my fingers at Congress and the Council. You saw Schuyler's life; how do you think 'twould suit me?"

"I think, sir," said Noel, "that if the country was not much settled, and you had everything to do, you might find a field for your powers. But when once you had consolidated your kingdom—for what you mean to do would be no less—I fear, you would sit down and weep like Alexander."

"By heaven! you are a shrewder fellow than I took you for!" exclaimed the General, laughing. "But 'tis, I think, worth considering of; it offers me an honourable retreat. And when I had once started the thing, I could at any time, if I wished it, leave a viceroy in command."

He talked of this project till past midnight; and then, wishing Noel a Happy New Year, dismissed him, in a better humour than he had been in for several days.

So many persons came to pay their respects to the Governor on New Year's Day, that it was afternoon before he could go (as he insisted on doing, though he was still in much pain) to pay his own to General Washington. By this time, Noel had heard from Mr. Shippen that his brother was in town—only, as it seemed, for a single day, on his way to Lancaster and Charlottesville.

This information threw Noel into a great state of agitation. He had, ever since he could remember anything, looked up to his elder brother with so much love and admiration that any other feelings appeared shocking and monstrous. He tried to imagine himself meeting Jasper as man to man, and saying to him,—“She has decided between us. I do not accuse you of betraying me, but I can never see you with her; let us henceforth be strangers.” But he could not; it was easier to imagine himself uttering reproaches, and accusing Jasper of having availed himself of the kindness shown him in Boston for his brother's sake, to win the heart of that brother's mistress.

“If I say that, he'll never forgive me,” thought Noel; “and 'twill be better he should not.” But at this thought so terrible a pain wrung Noel's heart that he cried aloud,—“No

—I cannot say it! and I must not see him, lest I should say it unawares!”

Wilder thoughts still took hold of him—thoughts of sending Jasper a mortal defiance—not that he even dreamed of lifting his hand against his brother, but that in the distortion of all his ideas he fancied he saw here a way of escape from the pent-up anguish of the last six months.

“We could fight with pistols,” he thought, staring gloomily into the fire. “He’s a good shot. Of course, I should take care not even to load mine. I could make that all right with my second; and if Jasper put a bullet through my heart, I should be much obliged to him. I’d forgive him then—I should have had my revenge.”

Noel found considerable comfort in contemplating this diabolical picture—only dashed by the secret conviction that (supposing Jasper could ever be goaded into a meeting) he would most likely not load his own pistols either—“or fire ’em off in the air, and make a fool of me,” thought Noel, going to the window—he was in his own room—and looking down into the street. “I wonder he don’t write, if he’s too proud to come,” he thought, with a sudden change of mood. “After all, he’s got so much the best of it, that I don’t see as he ought to wait for me to make all the advances.”

The cold air may have contributed to bring Noel into this cooler temper. At any rate, he shut the window with a sigh, and went back to the fire in a wholesome revulsion of shame, at the thought of the horror which his mother and Mary would feel, if they ever knew that he had for a single instant entertained such an idea as challenging his brother. “They’d never believe that I only wanted him to kill me,” he thought, bursting into tears. His father, too, who had often said that the family broils of the Braxholms and the Butlers were a disgrace to their names!

As Noel recovered some degree of calmness, he told himself that he would leave it to chance; perhaps he should meet Jasper without seeking him—or perhaps Jasper would come to him.

In the midst of these debates, Major Clarkson, one of the aides, came to say that the General was ready to go and wait upon His Excellency. Noel followed, with a very uneasy—was it heart or conscience, or both? It was by no means unlikely that he might come face to face with Jasper in the very presence of His Excellency; and if he did, of course he must greet

him. Yet how could he give his hand to his brother with so much soreness rankling in his heart ?

But Jasper was not there, and Noel was at once unspeakably relieved, and infinitely disappointed. It would have been so much easier to get their first encounter over in public. As they were returning, the General asked him if he was ill ?

"I doubt you caught a cold, sitting up so late with me last night," he said good-naturedly. "You Virginians don't love frost and snow—though I should scarce say so to one who went with me to Quebec !"

As soon as he was released from attendance, Noel renewed the battle with himself in which he had been all day engaged. In the depths of his heart, he longed for reconciliation, and believed that Jasper longed for it too. He once more read Jasper's letter—that letter which he had never answered. Some time afterwards Jasper had written a second letter ; it was very brief, and in it he had merely said, that he believed if Noel knew how much grief his silence was causing him, he would not continue in it.

"Why don't he come ?" thought Noel ; "if I could see him without Althea, 'twould be so much easier !"

The thought of Althea—lost to him for ever, and yet for ever so near him—had from the first been one of intolerable anguish. It would have been less hard to lose her, he fancied, if at Valley Forge Jasper had confessed the truth. "I would have bidden him go and try his fortune," he said to himself. "'Tis strange he never suspected she loved him ; I never imagined she'd more than a sisterly kindness for me, though, to the last, I hoped to turn it into something more. He has stood strangely aloof ever since ; he should have compelled me to be reconciled to him ; he must know I desire it, but don't know how to set about it."

Noel finally determined to force himself to what was at once the simplest and the most difficult thing he could do. He had been glad to be obliged to decline Mr. Fleming's invitation to dinner, but he began to think that this might have been the easiest solution. He now resolved to go round to Pine Street, and wish them all a Happy New Year. It would be easy to avoid seeing Jasper alone ; he need stay but a few moments. But he would have once more pressed his brother's hand in kindness, and the first most embarrassing interview would be over. If, as was possible, Jasper should be gone to

Mrs. Maverick's, he would at least have done his part. But he felt the old tumult in his heart, at the thought that Jasper might at that very moment be at Althea's side, and he hurried past the house with a bitter sense of being shut out.

This most unreasonable feeling had not ceased rankling, when he approached the Flemings' house in Pine Street. The windows of the first storey were lighted ; and in the clear cold air he could distinctly hear the notes of a guitar, and Althea's voice singing to it. He recognised it instantly, and he could distinguish nearly every word of the song—

“Return, return from over the seas,
And go to the wars no more !
Return, return !”

She ceased, but Noel still waited—the pangs of despised love gnawing more fiercely at his heart than ever. She was there—singing love-songs to Jasper, while he, forgotten and alone, listened outside in the snow. Just then, he heard Mary's full sweet voice strike up in his own favourite song ; she had often sung it for him in happier days, when rejected love had been as much a luxury as a pain—

“My lodging is on the cold ground,
And hard, very hard, is my fare ;
But that which grieves me more
Is the coldness of my dear.”

Noel would have cast himself down then and there in the snow, but for a sense that it would be unmanly in a soldier. The next moment he turned and fled—with all the Furies of jealousy behind him—and hurried away, not knowing whither he went, but instinctively making for the open country-roads.

He never could remember where he went—he seemed to be wandering for hours through the snow. The moon was not yet up, but the snow cast a dim and chilly gleam. The snow was deep ; Noel trampled it down savagely—hurrying on, till he was breathless and almost exhausted with his own fierce passion, and the effort of rapid motion in the frosty atmosphere. So he fled, trying to escape his own thoughts (alas ! they were as swift as he), until, plunging into a deeper drift than usual, he stumbled and fell in the snow.

The shock recalled him to time and place. He got up and looked about him, and saw that he was far on the road to Germantown. Scarcely a stone's throw beyond, he saw a light

in a window, and other lights here and there traced the long line of the single street. In the intense stillness he heard a dog bark at the farther end of the town, and then all again was still.

Noel could not have found himself here at any time, without thinking of that foggy autumn morning (scarcely fifteen months ago), when these fields had quaked at the thunder of battle, and been trampled by armed men. But now, alone, long after nightfall, with the death-like desolation of the snow spreading all around, and a distorted blood-red moon just rising, he was seized with a sort of supernatural horror. The trees, their leafless branches wrapped in snow, seemed like the ghosts of dead soldiers risen in their winding-sheets. They seemed to his excited fancy to rebuke him—to ask him what he did there above their graves? and to remind him that here his brother had fought and bled—that brother against whom he had been cherishing angry thoughts so long. If only Jasper were there, he thought, how easy it would be now to fall on his neck, and forget everything but that they were brothers! It seemed to him that he had committed an act of sacrilege in coming here with strife in his heart. All the superstitious tales he had ever heard thronged into his mind. The air seemed thick with invisible presences. Suddenly, a brilliant meteor rushed across the sky, leaving a trail of light behind it, and falling over Philadelphia.

But though Noel saw all this with a thrill of awe, he saw Jasper's face more clearly still—not triumphant or joyous, but with that look in the eyes which had so often perplexed him at Valley Forge—as though Jasper had ceased to expect anything. It went with him all the way back to Philadelphia—where he did not arrive till near midnight, and it haunted him all night long—so vividly, that he started out of an uneasy slumber, imagining he saw his brother sitting by the dying embers of the fire. As the mists of sleep cleared from his eyes, he saw that it was only his own cloak which he had thrown on the back of a chair, but the haunting presence could not be reasoned away.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A BROTHER OFFENDED.

“To be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain ;”

and there is no need to seek any further explanation of Noel's fancy than an uneasy mind. Jasper, however, had actually been in his brother's room. He had waited for him nearly two hours, and when he went away had left a message to the effect that he was to start for Lancaster next morning.

Finding that Noel made no sign, Jasper had resolved to go and see him.

“I have waited long enough,” he said to Althea, as he took her home. “I cannot endure this silence any longer. 'Tis terrible—'tis like death—but, forgive me, my dearest, for saying so to you.”

“Nay,” she said. “Do you think I don't feel it? I had thought of begging him to come to me, and perhaps letting him meet you too—but I dared not. 'Tis better, I'm sure, that you and he should have no go-between.”

Jasper, as he watched the embers on his brother's hearth, did not see so very much more agreeable a prospect there than Noel himself had found in looking over the ghostly fields of Germantown. Noel's avoidance of him could mean but one thing; and as Jasper tried to imagine a future with Noel estranged, not even the memory of Althea's tenderness to him that day could lift the weight from his heart.

He had prepared himself for some violent scenes—for furious reproaches—even for cruel accusations. He thought he could have borne them all better than this absolute silence.

“If he wants to be revenged on me,” thought Jasper, “he has found out how to do it. If he had wronged me, I could have compelled him to hear me. I've not wronged him intentionally, God knows—but 'tis as though I had; and being so blest as to have won Althea, I cannot insist on his forgiving me for it! Yet, oh, my God! how shall I endure it, if we are to be at variance?”

Jasper set down Noel's silence to simple resentment—a resentment too deep for words.

“As we are brothers, he cannot call me out,” he thought

bitterly ; "so he takes this way—a thousand times crueller, though not so wicked in the world's eyes—to let me know what he would do, were it any other man."

Many times, during that hour of waiting, had Jasper imagined he heard his brother's step approaching, and nerved himself for the meeting ; and after each disappointment his heart misgave him more and more. He believed that Noel was in the house, and had denied himself to him. The servant who had opened the door had said at first that Major Branzholm was at home, and had afterwards pretended (as Jasper unjustly suspected) to discover that he had gone out again—Jasper fancied the man had looked at him curiously as he said it. As this idea took root in Jasper's mind, it caused him the acutest pain—mingled, as the time wore on, with some anger.

"He will let me, I suppose, wait till I am tired, and then I may go away," he thought, kicking a falling log into its place with unnecessary vehemence. "He treats me as if I was a wretch so vile that he will not even send me a message ! If he thinks I have wronged him, let him accuse me of it to my face ! I am in the ridiculous position of not knowing on what terms we are to be. However, I'll not force myself upon him !"

But in spite of this momentary resentment, Jasper went away exceedingly sorrowful. He found Mary still up. She was sitting by the fire in the parlour.

"Well ?" she said eagerly, as he came in—nobody locked his street-door in Philadelphia in the good old times. "You've been a long while gone." Mary was pale—as pale as Jasper himself.

"I have not seen him," he said sadly. "I fear—I greatly fear, Mary, that he denied himself to me."

Then seeing Mary's look of distress and dismay, he kissed her very tenderly.

"Poor girl," he said, "you did not expect this, nor did I. How unlike him is this cold resentment ! His very nature is changed. Mary, I can never forgive myself for having been the cause of it——"

He had thrown himself into a chair, and, laying his head on the table, gave way to an outburst of grief which he tried in vain to control.

"If he had reproached me, I could have borne it—'tis this silence," he said at last. "Such a generous, open nature as he always was ! I feel almost as though I had murdered him !

That he could know me so near, and yet persistently remain away ! I could not have done it, however he had wronged me."

"I don't believe he did it," said Mary, her voice trembling. " 'Tis as you say, unlike him, and I'll not believe it of him. He is, I'm sure, as unhappy as you are yourself. He loves you, I'm convinced, as much as ever——"

"Tell him when you see him," Jasper began, looking up at Mary, "that if—but no ! I'll send no message ! Words—even the best-intentioned—might make the breach wider, and can never help to heal it. We're past that now."

* * * * *

Jasper had a few moments with Althea next morning, before he rode away. It was a sorrowful parting, although he hoped to return before many weeks should have passed. In the lingering hope that Noel might yet come, he put off his departure to the last moment, and returned to his uncle's house, after bidding Althea farewell. Although nothing had been publicly said about it (even Mrs. Fleming having on this occasion had the discretion to hold her tongue), they all knew that Jasper had had no communication with his brother while in town.

After Jasper was gone, Mary listened to her mother's lugubrious remarks on the unsatisfactory religious state of Philadelphia, Miss Digby's Episcopalian views, and the uncertainty of life, until her endurance was at an end, and she suddenly announced her intention of going to see Miss Digby—there would be just time before dinner. She accordingly hurried off, and had got to the corner of Market Street, when she came face to face with Noel.

Mary turned pale when she saw him.

"Is Jasper gone?" asked Noel, without pausing for the ordinary greetings. He looked haggard and as if he had been up all night.

"Yes, he is gone," returned Mary. And then, seeing that Noel's face fell, she added boldly,— "And I think you have behaved very wickedly. You have let the Old Year go down upon your wrath—and all the town will know now that you and Jasper have quarrelled. I used to think better of you !"

"Of course you take his part ; I'm prepared for that," said Noel, foolishly nettled at Mary's last words.

"There's no part to take ; 'tis *you* I'm disappointed in, that's all," retorted Mary, striking where she saw the weak point. "I thought you had been more—more——"

"More what, Mary? Speak out; you'll not offend me," said Noel quietly.

"More just—more manly—since you wish me to say it. And though I don't expect you to care for what I feel, I should have thought you might have been sorry to make Althea wretched."

"I can never be happy till I know you are so——" Althea had written those words to Noel six months ago. They caused him some remorse at this moment.

"You cannot understand what a man feels," he said; and then he added bitterly,—“Women think our attachment to them is as slight a thing as theirs is to us.”

"You do not, you cannot think so—you know 'tis a false, wicked thing to say—you know women are more faithful, more constant——"

Mary's face had flushed crimson, and angry tears were sparkling in her eyes.

"I know I'm a miserable dog, and all my friends turning against me—even you, that I thought was like my own sister," said Noel excitedly.

"I am the same as ever I was; 'tis you are changed," returned Mary. "You used to be as open-hearted as the day—I would never have believed you could harbour a black thought in your heart——"

"Now, 'tis you are unjust, Mary; my thoughts, I'm sure, don't deserve to be called black! If you think I can be easy while I'm at variance with my brother, you do me a monstrous wrong. If I've avoided seeing him, God knows 'twas only because I was afraid I might perhaps in heat say what would wound him. I would not see him, I thought, till I could be sure of not hurting him."

"He's hurt a thousand times worse by your unkind, unnatural silence," said Mary. "'Twas only this morning he said that if you had reproached him he could have borne it—but to refuse yourself to him, as you did last night——"

"I never did! I swear I never did!" cried Noel passionately. "How unjust, how suspicious he is grown! If he came, I did not know of it—no one told me."

"When Black Billy first says you're in, and then comes in half an hour to say you're gone out, what can Jasper think but that you denied yourself purposely?" asks Mary.

"I was out—I started on purpose to see him, but my

courage failed me at the last moment—and my head ached so that I scarce knew what I was doing—and I walked to get rid of it,” said Noel, somewhat incoherently—he felt a good deal ashamed of himself as he remembered last night, and was glad to think that Mary could know nothing about it. “I was on my way to him now—but I suppose he’s gone away angry with me——”

“Indeed, he is not,” cried Mary earnestly; “he was heart-broken last night, when he came back. He had waited two hours for you; and what hurt him so was fancying you was there all the while, and wouldn’t see him. If you’d heard what he said, you’d, I hope, have been ashamed of yourself, to think you could be so cruel to a brother that was willing to sacrifice his happiness for you! He couldn’t believe to the last you’d let him go without seeing you; he waited——”

“I’ve a great mind to go after him——” said Noel, much moved by Mary’s words.

“Oh, do, do, dear Noel!” cried Mary, taking his hand in both hers, and pressing it eagerly. “You’ll be easier, believe me; and if Althea’s good opinion is anything to you, she will say ’tis generous, and like yourself.”

Perhaps Mary had better not have referred to Althea. Noel’s face, which had cleared somewhat, clouded over again; but he repeated that he thought he would go after Jasper, and Mary went on her way (Noel did not offer to escort her to Miss Digby’s door) with a much lighter heart—although the first token she gave of it was to burst into a flood of tears, as soon as she saw Althea.

Jasper, with Telemachus behind him, pressed on in a not very enviable state of mind. Like most persons whose sense of duty is keen, he could not shake off the notion that he must be somehow to blame. His moral judgement was too healthy for him ever to have entertained the idea of a perfectly useless self-sacrifice; but the thought of his brother estranged was inexpressibly painful to him. He had perhaps a little underrated the strength of Noel’s attachment to Althea, and had forgotten that his brother was no longer a boy. His anticipations had seemed dark enough—but he told himself now that this stern, chilly implacability was worse than his worst fears. In fact, by this time, each of the brothers had pretty well persuaded himself that the other would never forgive him.

It much distressed Telemachus to see his master riding with head bent down and not speaking a word. Telemachus was not only perfectly well acquainted with all the circumstances which had occurred, but was also in possession of so many which had not, that he was at this very moment congratulating himself on having got his master safe out of Philadelphia, without the orthodox duel, which so often wound up affairs in which a lady was concerned. He was also considerably perturbed at the delay in starting, as he had shrewdly calculated that this would involve passing the night at Hallibut's, with the risk of getting one's throat cut by that enterprising tavern-keeper.

On arriving, however, at the tavern (soon after dark), Telemachus saw only new faces, and asking for Old Man Hallibut, was informed rather curtly that he had gone away. The speaker—a youngish man, dressed in a short coat, lined with an old blanket, who looked as though he might have served in the militia—added, with a suspicious look at Jasper, that for aught *he* cared, Old Man Hallibut might be gone to the Devil—where he had belonged of rights this many a year.

As the new landlord (for so he appeared to be) evidently intended this opinion for the ears of his guest, Colonel Fleming here observed, that an experience which he had had there one day last summer had led him to form a precisely similar opinion.

"I'm partikler glad now to hear you say so, stranger," said the landlord, in a much more friendly tone. "Do you know, now, your man en-quirin' like that for the old un', made me begin to sorter wonder ef you wasn't one of his kidney yourself."

By this time, the Colonel had been shown into the inn parlour; but as the fire had only been that instant lighted, and the chimney was smoking furiously, he was glad to beat a retreat into the kitchen, where he gathered from his host's conversation, that Old Man Hallibut's share in the attempted surprise of the Marquess had not only been discovered, but had led to some other awkward revelations, and that Old Hallibut had soon after mysteriously vanished. "But whether," observed the landlord, looking attentively at the Colonel's hat—as the rest of his uniform was covered by his cloak—"whether he tuk himself off, or whether he was made away with, nobody knows, an' don't much care."

The parlour was much the same as Jasper remembered it. Old Hallibut had evidently left his furniture behind him, and

Jasper was inclined to accept the darker explanation of his disappearance. His host waited upon him at dinner, or, to speak more correctly, he watched Telemachus do so, reserving himself for the more important duties of asking his guest every conceivable question which curiosity could dictate. Jasper was glad at last to plead fatigue as an excuse for being left alone.

It was some time after this that a knock was heard at the house door; and Telemachus (then entertaining the company in the kitchen with a particular account of the German prisoners at Cambridge) heard Major Branzholm's voice, inquiring whether he could have a bed, and whether there was not a military gentleman there from Philadelphia?

"A tallish gentleman—with one arm—in a blue coat—rather a fair complexion——" begins the landlord.

"That's he," says the newcomer, interrupting this description. "Where is he? Don't announce me—I'll go in to him—I'm his relation."

And while his horse was led off to the stable, and before Telemachus—whose thoughts leaped instantly to pistols and a duel, to be fought across the parlour table—could stir from the spot to which he stood rooted, Major Branzholm had thrown off his cloak, opened the parlour door, and gone in—carrying with him, unless Telemachus's eyes deceived him, a pair of holster-pistols.

This completed the dismay of poor Telemachus. Without stopping to reflect that gentlemen seldom use holster-pistols in affairs of this nature, and that Major Branzholm had probably only taken his pistols with him as a common precaution, and to prevent the powder getting damp, he slipped out of the kitchen, and carefully applied his ear to the parlour keyhole—resolved to rush in on the least alarm, and defend his master with his life. As Telemachus had a constitutional dislike to firearms of every description, he ought to be credited with having hereby performed an act of heroic self-devotion.

Jasper, who had slept the night before as little as Noel, and was moreover drowsy with the long ride through the snow, was lying on the settle by the fire, with a saddle-bag for a pillow—so fast asleep, that even the opening of the door did not immediately awake him.

Noel looked at him for a moment, as he lay with his face a little turned towards him—his empty sleeve lying across his breast, and his right arm hanging down, and almost touching

the floor. A book had fallen from his hand, and lay open; Noel recognised it as a little much-used copy of Gray, which Jasper often carried about with him.

He lay so still, and looked so weary—though his face was very calm—that Noel waited, unwilling to disturb him; but perhaps Jasper felt his gaze, for he presently stirred, and his face changed.

“Jasper,” said Noel, softly at first, and then louder—“Jasper! Jasper!” he said again, laying a hand on his brother’s shoulder.

In a moment Jasper had sprung up, his own hand on his sword. Then he saw who it was, and let his sword fall to his side, as he said sternly—observing the pistols on the table, and mistaking Noel’s pale and haggard looks for the whiteness of anger—

“What folly is this, Noel? If you have come here imagining you can provoke me into giving you a meeting, no consideration on earth shall ever make me do it!”

But Noel stretched out his arms to his brother, as he cried, the tears gushing from his eyes,—“No, no, brother! I come for reconciliation!” And Telemachus, his ear glued to the keyhole, heard his master cry in a voice so agitated that he would not have known it,—“Oh, my dear brother! Oh, thank God!”

* * * * *

After this, there was so long a silence, that Telemachus dared not wait to hear more, lest he should be caught eaves-dropping. He stole back to the kitchen—so greatly relieved in his fears, if not in his curiosity, that he could not withstand the temptation of giving a highly-coloured narrative of his visit to the tavern last summer, and of the manner in which his master had discovered and defeated Old Hallibut’s plan to surprise the Marquess.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CAPTAIN DIGBY IN THE SOUTH.

ON his arrival at Lancaster, Colonel Fleming found that respectable town in a sad uproar, and Colonel Troup, the Continental officer in command, in a high state of indignation.

Some mischievous persons had, by way of a hoax, persuaded the good folks of Lancaster that King George had made a present of their town to General Riedesel, in return for his crossing the seas to put down the rebellion. This excellent jest had like to have proved very sober earnest for the poor Baron and his Germans. The Lancastrians were furious—it was all Colonel Troup could do to protect his prisoners from absolute insult, and more than he could do to get the outraged Lancastrians to supply their wants. Colonel Fleming's utmost eloquence did but half convince the townspeople that the King of England had not given away their town.

Colonel Fleming accompanied the troops to Charlottesville, vainly attempting by the way to cheer poor General Riedesel. His captivity weighed heavily on him, and as his beloved Baroness and her children were not to follow for some weeks, his spirits were at even a lower ebb than usual. General Phillips, who was very fond of the Baron, was himself still deeply incensed at having been put under arrest, and had not ceased to talk about poor Brown's murder, as he always called that most unhappy affair. When the Baroness came, things were better, though still sufficiently dismal. The Baroness made the best of everything—even of the dreadful journey through savage ravines covered with snow and ice—and laughed at everything which could by any possibility be laughed at; but the honest Baron could not take things thus lightly. A farmer came in one day, and wanted to see what Germans were like; the Baroness made a joke of it, but the poor General shed tears at beholding his dear Frederika put to such indignity. He would talk with Phillips by the hour together of the Seven Years' War, in which they had served together under the Great Frederick, but nothing—not even his wife and his little girls—could make him ever forget that he was a prisoner. The Baroness set him to gardening; but as he would not wear a hat, the only result of this was a bad sunstroke. At last, late in the autumn, Phillips and he were allowed to go to New York on parole, with a view to their being exchanged, and arrived there just before Sir Henry Clinton set out for Charleston.

From all this it will be seen how lucky Captain Digby was to have been sent on that perilous errand, and so escaped being included in the Convention of Saratoga.

Some little time before Colonel Campbell's expedition

sailed, Jack André one day bluntly asked his friend when the marriage was to come off?

"What marriage?" asked Fred, suddenly becoming the hue of a boiled lobster—it was impossible Jack could know of Miss Fleming's letter, yet what else could he mean?

"Why, your sister and Colonel Hudibras, to be sure," says André in a light tone, assumed to cover some embarrassment.

"Who the doose is he?" asked Fred, staring.

"'Tis the name of a Roundhead, in a certain poem which made a deal of noise in its day," explained André, carelessly leaning back in the window-seat. "Art so dull, Fred, as not to guess I mean thy friend, the one-armed rebel Colonel, who read us all such a lecture in Philadelphia? Come, thy face betrays thee, Fred—denial is vain. I'll stake my existence, 'twas not for nothing your sister threw a quart of water over me, for calling him Hudibras."

"Good heavens! Jack, what on earth d'ye mean?" says Fred in a huff. "I don't know who what's-his-name was—but I don't like the sound of his name, and I suppose you mean to make fun of Fleming—who happens, by the bye, to be a particular friend of mine. But as to Ally's throwing a quart of water over you, 'tis going a little too far to say such a thing of a lady, even in jest."

"'Twas by the purest accident in the world," said André, hastening to appease his friend. "Nevertheless, I had offended her, and it was the direct consequence of my misdeed, though not, as I tell you, wilfully done by her. I promise you, she took up the cudgels for him! He owes me eternal gratitude. However, your sister forgave me—to tell you the truth, I made her an apology on my knees."

"Half this is jest, of course, Jack," said Fred, now quite good-humoured again. "You've such a way of putting things, that I never know which is earnest and which is jest, and I'm hanged if I can make head or tail of it all."

"'Tis all true, on my honour," protested André, who hugely enjoyed playing upon his friend's simplicity. "I suspected Colonel Fleming had made an impression, and was resolved to prove it, so I artfully led the conversation round to him, but I came by the worst for my pains; my attempt to make the Colonel appear ridiculous ended, as I've told you, in my finding myself on my knees in a pool of water, surrounded by the roses I had just presented to the ladies."

"I wonder Ally never told me of it," said Fred. "However, Jack, I'll be bound you got yourself out of the scrape with flying colours somehow or other."

"Only, though, by making a most handsome speech about the Colonel, confound him! if he is your particular friend," returns André. "But all this while you aint answered me—when is the happy event?"

"Ally won't hear of it till the rebellion's put down," replied Fred, thus indirectly admitting the main fact.

"Is that the way she phrases it to Colonel Hudibras?" asked André slyly, yet with a something in his manner unmistakably showing chagrin.

"But how on earth came you to suspect anything, Jack? I never had the least idea of it," observed Fred—as though it must in this case have been a mystery indeed. "And when she told me, I was so completely took aback, you could have knocked me down with a feather."

"I love thee, Fred, but thou art not a conjurer," returned his friend. "How did I suspect it? Why, I felt her start, as she had my arm, while we was going down into the hall after supper, on the night of the Mischianza; and I saw in her eyes the look a woman hath when she sees what she has been looking for. There stands the Colonel, frowning disapproval—

'Quoth he, in all my life 'till now
I ne'er saw so profane a show—'

looking as if he would like to put us all to the sword—stern, uncompromising—he winced, though, when he saw your sister, and bit his lip; he's not all iron and steel, though he looks so, and I fancy that moment put his philosophy shrewdly to the touch. Then they went out together into the garden—I would have given a great deal to know what they talked about. Was it made up between 'em that night—if 'tis not an indiscreet question?"

"I fancy so," replied Fred. "But really, Jack, 'tis like inspiration! Oh, how I wish you was coming with us to Georgia; time never hangs heavy where you are!"

Colonel Campbell's expedition was entirely successful. In less than a fortnight Georgia was reduced; and by the beginning of March, General Prevost (who had by that time arrived at Savannah from Florida, and assumed the command) wrote home to Lord George that the rebels would not again disturb us here.

The only fault of this campaign in Digby's eyes was that it was too short. For several weeks after Colonel Campbell had set out for England, with this letter and his laurels, Fred remained biting his nails in Savannah—sighing for Jack André, Wickham, and the other choice spirits left behind in New York—thinking dismally of Mary Fleming—and looking out over the islands and swampy flats, trying to imagine a body of rebels approaching through the distant cane-brake. But the bright green of the young canes was only stirred by the sluggish south-east breezes blowing from the Bahamas.

Many a weary day had he spent thus, and had come to the conclusion that a landscape whose monotony is only relieved by ships' masts and palmetto trees is of all others the most insipid, when, at the end of April, news was received that the rebel General Lincoln (encamped on the other side of the Savannah river) had marched the greater part of his army towards Augusta, in order to protect a meeting of rebel delegates. General Prevost instantly resolved to profit by this opportunity, and make a dash at Charleston. He very nearly succeeded, and had actually summoned Charleston, when, hearing that Lincoln was hurrying back, he was compelled to raise the siege that same night, and betake himself to the islands south of the harbour, there to wait for the supplies and reinforcements expected from New York. Captain Digby, though thus disappointed of a siege, was in the affair at Stono Ferry. Colonel Maitland, who commanded there, was a friend of Captain André, who had particularly recommended Digby to him.

Although during part of this time, Sir George Collier and General Matthews were in Virginia (where they took or destroyed a vast amount of stores and prizes), very little trustworthy information reached General Prevost's army of what was going on in other parts, and that little came by the round-about way of New York. Thence Digby heard of Sir Henry Clinton's expedition up the Hudson, and of Tryon's more important descent on Connecticut. A less agreeable piece of news, which was received soon after, was an account of the surprise of Stony Point by General Wayne. This was especially disagreeable news to Captain Digby, as Colonel Johnson, who commanded in that fort, was a friend of his. But the loss of the fort (which the rebels at once dismantled and abandoned) was far more than made up for, by the destruction a little

later on of the whole marine force of Boston, by Sir George Collier, in the Penobscot, in Maine.

In every letter which reached the army from New York, mention was made of the rebel cruisers—who kept the town in constant alarm—and of the movements of General Washington's army, which seemed to show that he was meditating a serious attack.

It was very galling to Digby, while thus cooped up on Port Royal, to know that the detachment under General Grant (which had left New York last November) was enjoying the privilege of beating the French at Santa Lucia. Why had he not gone with it, instead of coming to this pestilential hole? he asked himself, as he looked round on the steaming swamps. Grant's troops had landed on Santa Lucia, taken all the forts, and held them against the whole of D'Estaing's fleet and army, which had hove in sight just as the last French flag on the hill posts had struck! All through the unwholesome heats of summer did Captain Digby fret at the thought of it. But his turn was to come. At the beginning of September, the French fleet suddenly appeared off the coast in great force, and a few days afterwards an order came to Colonel Maitland, to join General Prevost instantly, as Savannah was certainly the enemy's object.

As the ship-channel was held by the French fleet, Colonel Maitland was obliged to make a detour by the marshes, and thought himself very lucky to be able to drag his empty boats through a cut, and so drop down the river into the town. As they went, they heard that Lincoln was crossing at Zubly's Ferry, and that the siege had begun. That was an anxious moment, when, on the morning of the 16th, they came in sight of Savannah—but the British colours were still flying on the redoubts.

They were none too soon—D'Estaing had already summoned the town to surrender to the King of France, reminding General Prevost of how he had taken Granada, and threatening him with a sack.

This insolent summons, and the French Admiral's discourteous refusal some days after to allow the women and children to go down the river in ships, under the protection of a French man-of-war, made Fred rejoice more than ever at the prospect before him. The enemy was in overwhelming superiority, but the works were pushed on with such spirit and

effect that when, before dawn on an October morning, the assault was made, it was repulsed with great loss to the assailants—who, however, twice planted their colours on the parapet of one of the redoubts. Captain Digby here greatly distinguished himself—beating back the enemy, who were swarming over the parapet, and afterwards bringing up his company to support the grenadiers in that decisive charge which cleared the ditches, and drove the enemy into the swamp. On the 18th, the siege was raised, and the French fleet set sail once more for the West Indies.

But though the French had gone, the rebels remained, and despatches in cipher were received from Sir Henry Clinton, informing General Prevost of his intention, so soon as he should be assured the French had left the American coasts, to himself attempt the reduction of South Carolina. After a long and terrible voyage, Sir Henry reached Savannah at the end of January, with most of his horses dead.

Captain Digby now enjoyed a few days of the society of his friend André. André was by this time a Major—having been promoted by Sir Henry expressly that he might hold the Adjutant-Generalship resigned by Lord Rawdon. André's rapid promotion would certainly have given rise to heart-burnings, if he had been a less agreeable fellow. Every one said that he could do as he liked with Sir Henry, and he made use of his influence to get Digby the majority which had been promised him ever since he carried poor General Burgoyne's last appeal for succour.

That unfortunate General (Fred learned from André) was now in dire disgrace for having declined, partly on the score of his health, to return and share the captivity of his army. The poor General had, it seemed, pathetically complained of being ordered into captivity, just when a war with France gave him an opportunity of wiping out his misfortune. Digby swore it was a shame, and Burgoyne the most ill-used of Generals—in his heart he had never forgiven Sir Henry for not bursting through forests and mountains and all other obstacles to his relief.

Sir Henry intended to try and regain Charleston, and Major Digby's regiment was almost immediately ordered thither from Savannah. After a twelve days' march across swamps, rivers, and inlets, they reached the main army, encamped on the islands already only too familiar to Digby. They found the town

invested by land and sea, and the engineers hard at work on the first parallel.

The six weeks' siege of Charleston was marked by the usual incidents of skirmishes, parleys, and reconnaissances. As soon as the Admiral could get over the bar—which was a matter of great difficulty and danger, Sir Henry Clinton had summoned the town. Colonel Tarleton and his Legion, by taking possession of Biggin's Bridge on Cooper River, soon cut off the last communication between Charleston and the country, and on the 21st of April, reinforcements arrived—among them the Queen's Rangers, but, to Major Digby's great disappointment, Captain Wickham had been left behind with the Hussars on Staten Island, New York being now in a very unprotected condition.

Somewhere about this time, Major Digby, calling at Major André's quarters, was informed by his servant that he was gone across Cooper River with a message to Lord Cornwallis. It struck Digby as rather odd that the Adjutant-General should be sent on such a service, but as news came in that night that Colonel Tarleton (then with his lordship) had totally cut off a body of the enemy's horse at the Santee, he supposed that André's errand might have concerned this affair.

Happening to be off duty next evening, a little after dark, he went to see if his friend had returned, and, after being kept waiting with unusual ceremony, was admitted.

He found the Major evidently but just arrived, and still in his travelling cloak and a round hat.

"Come in, my dear fellow, come in," he exclaimed, in a gleeful tone; "you can keep a secret, I know—not that 'tis of such great importance, now I'm safe back. I can't resist letting you see me. Confess, I should have imposed on you, had you met me in the streets of Philadelphia!"

So saying, the Major threw off his hat and cloak, and, composing his features to an admirable gravity, faced round on his friend, on whom he had hitherto turned his back.

"How goes the cause of our much-injured country?" asks the Major in a nasal drawl. "Have the hirelings of a crowned and sceptred tyrant hung up any more patriots lately?"

"'Pon my soul, André, 'tis magnificent!" cried Digby, staring in amazement. "But what's the object—you said something of a secret—sure you aint going to venture within the rebel lines?"

"I've been, sir, I've been!" cries the other, almost dancing

with triumph, and then once more composing himself to the sobriety befitting his long locks and homespun attire.

"But," stammered Digby, "supposing they'd discovered you, wouldn't they have hanged you?"

"What! hang the Adjutant-General of the British army! Insolent as they are, they would never dare *that*," says André easily. "But 'twould have been a cursed undignified position to be caught in, I grant you; and they would no doubt have put a high price on me, and refused to exchange me for less than a round dozen of their butcher, baker, and candlestick-maker Generals. But oh, Digby, 'twas exquisitely rich! I lay at the house of an honest quaker on the East Bay. His brother was there, ill of an ague, and looked at me plaguey hard—I believe he had his doubts of me, but durst not express 'em, lest he should get his brother strung up for harbouring me."

"But how did you get in? Was you not stopped by the patrols?" asked Digby, still scarcely able to believe his eyes.

"I fetched a compass, sir, as the Scripture hath it, and came down to the other side of the river, with a few fat beasts for the patriot garrison," replied André, putting on the Colonial twang. "I took 'em in most sweetly. I know every point of their defences, and that they expect to be relieved by the French fleet under De Ternay—for all their experience cannot teach 'em not to put their trust in Egypt. Sir Harry will take this hint, and press the siege with vigour—but not a syllable of this, Fred, to a living soul. The stratagem is one that will keep as long as 'tis undiscovered, and we may yet need it."

"You seem to find it a monstrous good joke, Jack," said Fred uneasily. "I confess 'tis the very last service I ever wish to be employed on, though of course there are circumstances which might make it one's duty—"

"You came very near to doing it yourself, my dear boy, after Saratoga," said André.

"And I'd sooner face a fire twenty times hotter nor the fire at Saratoga than do it again!" cried Fred. "I promise you, I felt a rope round my neck all the way!"

"You was in more danger than I," said André. "Sir Harry's rebel namesake is a terrible determined fellow. Well, Charleston must shortly fall—as sure as you will to-morrow morning see the steeple of Saint Michael's painted black."

"What the doose do you mean?" asked Digby, whose mind, moving slowly, had not yet recovered from its astonishment,

and who began to fear that the strain necessary for keeping up his assumed part had disordered his friend's brains. But André explained, that a rebel Commodore had taken it into his head that the white steeple was a conspicuous mark for the British artillerymen, and intended that very day to paint it black. And, sure enough, next morning a *black* steeple rose above the long line of white houses. But alas! the Commodore had only made matters worse—the black steeple was a still better mark than the white one!

CHAPTER XXX.

PENNSYLVANIA v. GOVERNOR ARNOLD.

Caius Marcius was
A worthy officer i' the war; but insolent,
O'ercome with pride, ambitious past all thinking,
Self-loving—
CORIOLANUS.

GENERAL ARNOLD had been appointed Governor of Philadelphia, expressly because the condition of the wound which he had received at Saratoga unfitted him for more active service. But the mental discomfort of his position bade fair to counterbalance the beneficial effect of bodily rest. Philadelphia was the residence of so many Tories and loyalists, that the greater part of the property in it belonged to persons unfavourable to the Declaration of Independence, if not disposed to accept almost any terms offered by the British Government. It was full of open enemies and lukewarm friends—most of them so eminently respectable, and so closely connected with the best families of the State, that summary measures of repression were likely to excite dangerous opposition.

A practical dilemma, however, had arisen, which could only be met by a somewhat summary remedy. Under the pretext of removing private property, a vast amount of goods had been transferred from the city to various places—to be eventually used, as every one knew, by the supporters of the British Government and even by the British army itself. To prevent this, Congress had ordered that no goods whatever should be removed from Philadelphia, until a Commission could decide whether such goods belonged legally to the King of England or any of his subjects; and, pending this Commission, shops and stores were ordered to be closed.

The Proclamation to this effect was written by President Reed, but the Governor issued it, and had the odium of it. The sleek Philadelphians asked each other why this New Englander was to rule them by martial law? And it must be owned that Arnold took small pains to propitiate them. His haughty temper, his magnificence—even his friendliness to Tory citizens—offended them; and a mighty piece of work was made about some wagons belonging to the State, which he had impressed in order to save some property belonging to persons obnoxious for having remained in the city during the British occupation.

The Governor's approaching marriage with the daughter of a Tory gentleman was another grievance. It may be imagined how little he was likely to tolerate interference on such a matter as this!

His accounts for the expenses which he had incurred in Canada had been severely challenged, referred from one committee to another, and were still unsettled.

The plan of a country-life had taken a great hold upon his imagination, ever since he had seen Philip Schuyler at home in that fine old manor-house near Saratoga, whose flames had lighted Burgoyne's last march. He had gone so far as to submit his enterprise to the New York deputies in Congress, and John Jay had approved of it, and had written to the Governor of New York State to beg him to use his influence in favour of the scheme.

Very early in February, General Arnold determined to go himself to Kingston—where the Legislature of New York State then sat. On his way he visited the camp at Middlebrook, to which General Washington had now returned. He laid his plans before His Excellency—who, however, listened with a somewhat incredulous smile. His Excellency himself desired nothing so much as to be able one day to return to that country-life which General Arnold was describing so eloquently. "But you, my dear sir, are, I fancy, a more restless spirit," he observed. "However, the undertaking is a useful one, and would, for some time at least, demand all your energies."

A disagreeable surprise, however, was awaiting the General. On his return to his lodging he found Major Braxholm just arrived, splashed from head to foot with hard riding, and wearing so grave a countenance that the General hastily asked if Miss Shippen was ill?

"No, sir—she was perfectly well when I left," replied Noel, taking a packet from his pocket. "Will you please to look at this, sir? 'Twas sent to Congress the instant you had left the town. Major Clarkson agreed with me that you ought to be informed of it as soon as possible."

"What!" cries the General, unfolding the packet—"Charges!"—and printed in the public journals, so as to prejudice me in the eyes of the people! This is the hand of Joseph Reed!"

The General's anger increased as he read. He grew purple with rage; the veins stood out on his forehead. He struck the table with his clenched fist, cruelly jarring his wounded leg; but he was by this time almost insensible to bodily pain.

"A d——d pack of snakes-in-the-grass!" he cried, crumpling the paper. "They knew weeks ago that I was going away, but they wait till I've turned my back! The black-hearted turn-coat charges me with having shut the stores! Congress ordered it, and he wrote the Proclamation! But I'll be righted! I'll demand a court-martial! I'll go to Washington this moment! Give me your arm!"

The discovery that a copy of the original draft had been sent to the various State-Governors, and indeed, to pretty nearly everybody except the accused person himself, did not tend to abate the General's wrath—it could hardly increase it. No one could read the charges without perceiving that the persons who had drawn them up had lost all sense of judicial fairness.

They were eight in number. The first accused General Arnold of having, last spring, given a permit to a vessel belonging to disaffected persons, to come into a port, without consulting the Commander-in-Chief, or the State Authorities.

The second related to the closing of the shops, and accused the Governor of having taken advantage of this to make purchases for his own benefit. The third charged him with imposing menial offices on the sons of freemen of Pennsylvania, when called out by Congress on military duty—and with having justified himself on the ground that the citizen is lost in the soldier. The fourth related to the sloop *Active*—a prize taken by some people of Connecticut, whose suit Arnold was charged with having illegally purchased. The fifth concerned the wagons. The sixth charged the Governor with furnishing a disaffected person with a pass; and the seventh, with having

"indecently and disrespectfully" refused to give any explanation about the wagons.

The last charge was less defined. It accused Arnold of having, during his command in Philadelphia, "discouraged and neglected" persons who had adhered to their country's cause, "with an entire different conduct towards those of another character;" and added that if the said command was, "as is generally believed," to cost the United States four or five thousand a year, Pennsylvania would be very unwilling to pay any share of it.

Three at least of these charges were obviously vexatious. In the others, the frequent recurrence of such expressions, as "it is alleged and believed," "it has been publicly charged," "it may be reasonably inferred," looked—to say the least of it—as though the framers of the indictment had more ill-will than legal proofs.

Of course, Althea very quickly heard of all this—even before Peggy Shippen came in one morning (a few days after Major Branhholm had posted off to the General), with a letter which she had just received from her betrothed, passionately imploring her not to be uneasy.

"As if I could help being uneasy!" says Peggy, quite pale, and her eyes red with crying. "As for President Reed, I should like to kill him, that I should! Nasty white-faced thing! He went to see papa the other day—I wish I'd known what he was about! He takes your hand in such a smooth sneaking way, and he never looks you in the face! How people can say he's handsome, I can't think! They say he's so elegant! I'm sure there's no accounting for tastes. I like a manly figure in a man. I wish I was married to him already, that I do! I won't have it put off a day, let my aunt talk as she likes!"

Major Clarkson (whose own name appeared in the charge about the pass) had instantly issued a card, begging the public to suspend their judgement; and the General himself now sent out another, in which he complained of the unfairness of this attempt to influence the public mind before trial.

He had demanded a court-martial. The charges were referred to a Committee, who reported that only four of them could come under the jurisdiction of a court-martial, the others being matters for a civil suit. The Committee further reported that they had no evidence on any charge except the fifth and

the seventh—the Council, though repeatedly applied to, having not only refused to furnish any, but having threatened the Committee, and charged them with partiality, for asking it. The Committee added in conclusion, that after the unexampled measures which the Council had employed against General Arnold, they were of opinion that no concession or acknowledgment could be expected from him.

Upon this the General naturally considered himself cleared. The Committee had expressly acquitted him of any intentional wrong. He resigned his command—for which he had Washington's permission—and wrote to Congress to beg them to report on his case at once, and so set him right with the public.

What then was his astonishment and indignation, when the Council wrote to Congress, that General Arnold had left the State while the charges were pending, and that a misunderstanding had prevented them from presenting their testimony!

By this time, the matter had become a State question. The Council had Pennsylvania behind it, and Pennsylvania must be kept in a good-humour. So, after another Committee, a court-martial was at last ordered for the 1st of May.

Before that day arrived, the General was married to Peggy Shippen. The ceremony took place in her father's house. Peggy was all smiles and tears, and looked, as Peggy Chew said to Althea afterwards, like a rose-bud dipped in dew. Althea at first wished to decline being present, but Peggy begged so hard, that she consented; and young Mr. Chew effectually prevented her having any difficulty in avoiding a *tête-à-tête* with Major Branzholm. The bridegroom leaned on his secretary's arm most of the time, and Noel felt this to be so great an honour, that he allowed himself to be carried away by the festive occasion, in spite of Althea's being there, and of the General's having a court-martial hanging over his head. Noel would have laughed to scorn the notion that the court-martial could properly be compared to the sword of Damocles. It was, he and most people thought, a mere form—a sop to pacify Pennsylvania. Yet it was in very truth the sword of Damocles—and it hung above not only Benedict Arnold but above the whole future of the States.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A WOUNDED NAME.

1st Cit. For my part,
When I said, banish him, I said, 'Twas pity.
2d Cit. And so did I.

CORIOLANUS.

MAJOR DIGBY was anathematising the swamps of Georgia, and Sir Henry Clinton, Lord Cornwallis, and Major André were tossing uneasily at sea, when General Arnold's trial came on at Morristown. When the 1st of May arrived, the Council of Pennsylvania said they were not ready with their evidence, so the trial was put off to the 1st of June—by which time the British were going up the Hudson, and American officers had other things to do than to hold court-martials.

The General endured the delay very impatiently. He had thought better of leaving the army, and now talked of seeking active service again, as soon as his wounds would permit—above all, as soon as his cause was heard. He had spent most of the time at the beautiful country-house which he had bought at Mount Pleasant, on the banks of the Schuylkill. Here his sister and his eldest son had visited him, and Peggy did the honours with great spirit.

It was now open war between the General and President Reed. When the discontents in Philadelphia broke out in October, in the Fort Wilson Riot, the President had ordered Arnold to leave the ground. He had obeyed—being no longer Governor of the city, but he had openly said to Mr. Wilson that the President had raised the riot, and made no attempt to conceal his contempt for him.

December was far advanced, and the army had gone into winter quarters, when the court-martial met at last. It sat at Morristown, and thither Noel went to hear his idolised commander triumphantly vindicated.

The trial of a General pre-eminent for personal gallantry, and still suffering from wounds received in the most brilliant achievement of the whole war, was a spectacle sufficiently odious in itself, and Arnold took care to make it as conspicuous as possible. Not content with allowing his wounds to plead for him, he appeared in the epaulettes and sword-knots

which Washington had sent him ; and in his defence he read the letter which had accompanied them, and also the letter of Congress, presenting him with a horse in the place of the two slain under him at Ridgefield—which horse, as every one knew, he was not even yet able to mount. He rehearsed his services and his wrongs, and commented with bitter irony on the President and the Council of Pennsylvania making it a charge against him that he had acted without consulting the Commander-in-Chief.

“Non tali auxilio eget, nec defensoribus istis,”

he said, sarcastically turning Virgil's line for the benefit of members of the Conway Cabal there present.

But he wound up with a more damning allusion still, and one which it was still more impossible to misunderstand.

“I can say,” he said—with a deadly emphasis on every word, and steadily fixing his eye on Reed's pale face, “I never basked in the sunshine of my General's favour, and courted him to his face, when I was at the same time treating him with the greatest disrespect, and vilifying his character when absent. This is more than a ruling member of the Council of the State of Pennsylvania can say—as it is *alleged and believed*.”

Having shot this arrow between the joints of President Reed's armour, the General awaited the decision of his judges, with very little doubt as to their verdict.

The trial had occupied many days, and judgement was not given till the end of January. The court acquitted the General on two of the charges, and exonerated him from all intentional wrong in the others ; but found that in the matters of the sloop *Active* and of the wagons he had behaved imprudently and improperly, considering his position—and sentenced him to be reprimanded by the Commander-in-Chief.

Arnold was astounded ; and public feeling ran so strong, that the Council themselves made haste to request Congress to dispense with the reprimand—finding, as they said, that the General's sufferings and services were so deeply impressed on their minds, as to obliterate every other sentiment.

But Congress was inexorable—perhaps some of its members were not sorry to compel Washington to rebuke Gates's rival.

Washington performed the unwelcome task assigned to him

as delicately as possible—even Noel confessed that, although his heart was almost bursting with indignation.

“Our profession is the chastest of all,” said His Excellency; “even the shadow of a fault tarnishes the lustre of our finest achievements. The least inadvertence may rob us of the public favour, so hard to be acquired. I reprimand you for having forgotten that in proportion as you have rendered yourself formidable to our enemies, you should have been guarded and temperate in your deportment towards your fellow-citizens.”

This was all the censure. His Excellency only added an exhortation to Arnold to exhibit anew those noble qualities which had placed him on the list of his country’s most valued commanders—and a promise to furnish him with every opportunity in his power of regaining his country’s esteem.

Mild as this reprimand was, it was still a reprimand. The indiscretions of which Arnold had undoubtedly been guilty—his haughty disregard of civil authority, his extravagance and ostentation—were all forgotten in the severity of his punishment. He had been subjected to the indignity of a public rebuke—for the sake, as all his friends said, and as most of the public believed, of conciliating the powerful State of Pennsylvania. Nor did the news from the South tend to make the country indifferent to this affront put upon a General who was always fortunate in the field, and unfortunate only in the malice of his enemies. ✓

As for Noel, he hardly dared speak of what he felt; only to Mary did he talk of the one ray of comfort to which he turned. Another French force was reported about to sail. When it arrived, the long-deferred recovery of New York would be undertaken—and then General Arnold would have that opportunity which Washington had promised him, and at another Saratoga would avenge his outraged honour by a last and crowning victory. Expecting this, Noel had refused to apply for employment in the Carolinas. “I was with him on the march to Quebec,” he said; “I fought beside him on Lake Champlain, and at Ridgefield and Saratoga, and I will follow no other General, so long as he holds a command.”

CHAPTER XXXII.

HAIR-SPLITTING.

Isabella.—I had rather
Wait on you to your funeral.

THE DUKE OF MILAN.

COLONEL FLEMING rejoined his regiment as soon as the Convention troops had settled down to their new mode of life, which offered many more alleviations than had been possible in the close quarters of Cambridge. The Colonel again spent a few days in Philadelphia (which he could hardly avoid passing through on his way to Middlebrook), and while there, he ventured to sound Mrs. Maverick as to the possibility of Miss Digby's consenting to marry him, without waiting for the close of a war which might still be prolonged for several years.

Mrs. Maverick—whom he had approached with some misgivings—to his great surprise, warmly seconded the idea, and declared she did not see why, if it was to be, it should not be at once.

She communicated this view to her young relative, but Althea, in great distress, entreated her not to try to persuade her, as nothing could alter her resolution.

"I know all you would say, dear cousin," she continued, as Mrs. Maverick would have replied. "Pray spare me; it costs me enough already, without the tortures of arguing about it. I could never be happy—'twould seem a sin, and I should expect a curse. If I could forget everything else, there is Fred——"

"I believe if Fred was to be asked, he'd say as I do, that if 'tis to be, there's no good reason for delay," said Mrs. Maverick, catching at this.

"It could not make me easy to do it, if he did," said Althea sadly.

"Besides, child, who knows"—Mrs. Maverick said this in a confidential, not to say Jesuitical tone—"who knows but what, when you're once married to the Colonel, you could get him to see things different? He's madly in love with you—I am an old woman, and know the signs, and his being so quiet don't deceive me. He worships the ground you tread on, and you might by degrees wean him——"

"Never say such a thing to me again, cousin!" said Althea, drawing herself up with a dignity which somewhat scared the old lady. She went on in a lower voice, which thrilled with suppressed passion—her eyes blazed, but her face was as white as a sheet: "Never say such a thing again! I would sooner die—nay, I would sooner see him dead before my eyes—than I would tamper with his honour! 'Twould be useless, I know—I should but lose his esteem for ever; but if I thought I could succeed, I would die sooner than attempt it! Oh, why did you say it?"

Here Althea threw herself on the sofa, and burst into hysterical tears.

"Lord, Lord, who'd have thought you'd have took it that way, child? God knows, I meant nothing dishonourable!" cried Mrs. Maverick in a fluster. "But all the world knows a man's wife can do pretty much what she likes with him."

"Not with Jasper Fleming!" cried Althea excitedly. "Oh, how little you must know him, to think I could persuade him from what he thinks is his duty! And how little you must know me, to think I'd try to do it!"

"For that matter, I don't suppose either of you is so mighty superior to all the rest of mankind, as to be above being influenced," said Mrs. Maverick, losing her temper. "I suppose the long and the short of all this is, that he has persuaded you to become as great a rebel as himself. Of course, if you think the rebels have the right of it——"

"I don't think it," returned Althea vehemently. "I think there's no right anywhere, for that matter—we're all wrong! We drove them to rebel in the first instance, but 'tis they now that won't be reconciled. But Colonel Fleming does not see it so, and I would sooner die than attempt to persuade him out of his conscience."

Mrs. Maverick, now very warm, protested she did not understand these high-flown, hair-splitting distinctions. If Althea thought Colonel Fleming took a wrong view, 'twas her plain duty to try and set him right; and to say that it was not, was mere sophistry.

"Are duty and honour sophistry?" asked Althea hotly. "Is it hair-splitting, to say that a man is a traitor if he abandons the side he believes to be in the right, even though that side may be actually in the wrong?"

On this Mrs. Maverick was so ill-advised as to say that—if

it came to that—Colonel Fleming was a traitor already, and——

“That he is not!” cried Althea, sobbing; “a rebel he may be, but no traitor! But I’ll not stay to hear you say such things of him!”

With this Althea flounced out at the door, and, going to her room, wept until she was not fit to be seen, while Mrs. Maverick, feeling decidedly worsted, began to consider what account she could give the Colonel of the embassy which she had undertaken. He was to come that afternoon to take a dish of tea with them, and it was with considerable trepidation that she received him. To her great relief, he anticipated her confession of failure, by saying, before she could begin it, that he was sorry he had broached the subject, as he was convinced on reflection that it would only cause pain to Althea.

“Well, the fact is,” said Mrs. Maverick, looking rather foolish, “I broached the subject to her just now——”

“You don’t mean to say she consents?” cried the Colonel—so eagerly, that Mrs. Maverick would have given a good deal not to have been obliged to reply,—

“No—she has scruples which I’ve tried in vain to combat. To tell you the truth, Colonel Fleming, I did my errand very awkwardly, and—and—said some things as I should be very glad to recall. I’ve offended Althea; and if she tells you what I said, I doubt you will be offended too.”

“Then I won’t ask her to tell me,” says the Colonel, kissing the old lady’s hand—she was almost in tears. “I should be an ungrateful wretch, indeed, if I was to take offence at a word. I trust Althea is not displeased with me for having made the proposal? ’Twas, I own, not quite fair to do so, but the temptation was very great——”

“Oh, you need have no fears there—she thinks you can’t err! She’s just been telling me that your wrong is better than other people’s right,” said Mrs. Maverick a little tartly—“She adores you——”

At this moment the door opened, and Althea herself came in. She was very pale, and the traces of tears were still quite visible, but she was perfectly calm and self-possessed. She walked straight up to Jasper, and without saying a word laid her head down on his shoulder like a tired child. There was an indescribable dejection about her manner which smote Jasper to the heart. He put his arm round her, but neither of them spoke.

"Well, I'll leave you," said the old lady, looking at them for a moment with genuine compassion for them both.

"Forgive me, Althea," said Jasper after a pause. "Forgive me, my dearest—I ought to have known——"

"If I say no, it almost kills me to say it," she sighed. "It cannot be for long—but I will do as Cousin Maverick says—I'll write to Fred. Perhaps by the time he gets the letter, peace may be made."

Two or three tears—the last of the shower—fell from her eyes as she spoke. Jasper saw them, and kissed them away. He made her sit down beside him, and soothed her as a mother does a child. She yielded almost passively to his caresses, her face hidden on his breast, and both her arms clasped about his neck.

"Do you think 'tis a foolish scruple, Jasper?" she said, after a long silence.

"'Tis a very natural one in so high-minded a woman as you," he replied; "but——"

"But what, dear? say all you think," she said, lifting up her head for a moment to see his face.

Jasper smiled, but his eyes were moist.

"I think, my dearest," he said, with an inexpressible tenderness in his tones, "that if the cause which divides us could not prevent us from loving each other, 'tis perhaps not a sufficient reason either why we should not marry."

"You forget Fred," said Althea sadly. "If he were not now actually in the field, I could better reconcile it to my conscience to be happy. But as it is—if he fell, I should feel as though it was a judgement on me."

"My poor girl!" he said, pressing her closer to his breast, as if he would protect her from her own thoughts. "'Twould be useless to reason with you now, but I hope one day to persuade you that God never requires a useless sacrifice. And I think Fred would say the same. But I do not wonder at your feeling thus, and I'm sorry I spoke—I should have known it would cause you pain."

His right arm was round her waist, and she was clasping his hand with one of hers—she laid the other tenderly on that dear maimed arm which could not embrace her, and with a passionate impulse stooped and kissed the cuff of the empty sleeve which lay just above his heart.

Althea could not get over her scruples, and Jasper did not

try to persuade her out of them. As they took leave of each other, she said—and he never forgot her look as she said it,—“You cannot doubt I love you; but remember that I honour you more—if that were possible—even than I love you, and I would sooner die than tamper with your honour.”

And he replied, much moved,—“’Tis only what I expected of you.”

“Then you do not think,” she said, with a very rainy smile, “that I am a woman of the sort that makes a man a traitor?”

Althea had generously refrained from telling Jasper what Mrs. Maverick had hinted at. He imagined that the good old lady might perhaps have gone so far as to call him a rebel (which he knew she had done before now), but suspected nothing worse, until—a very long time afterwards—Mrs. Maverick herself confessed her sin—artfully accompanying her confession with such a description of Althea’s behaviour on the occasion, as easily obtained his forgiveness.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MAJOR DIGBY’S CONCEPTION OF THE POINT OF HONOUR.

IN spite of Commodore Whipple’s ingenious device for rendering St. Michael’s steeple invisible, Charleston was compelled to surrender, and the British army shortly afterwards moved into the Carolinas—where Marion and his men kept up a guerrilla warfare, hiding in the swamps, and beating the saws of the saw-mills into swords. Lord Cornwallis was left in command, and Sir Henry Clinton returned to New York on the first news of the French fleet.

Major Digby’s new regiment was one of those which Sir Henry intended to take back with him, and Digby’s spirits (considerably depressed by several attacks of ague) rose at the prospect of again encountering our natural foes.

He arrived too late to take part in General Knyphausen’s expedition into New Jersey, and he was not sorry for it—these burning and spoiling excursions being not much to his taste. As he observed to André, he thought a gentleman cut a poor figure setting fire to barns and farmhouses, and he did

not care how little he had of such work. If it must be done, it had better be left to the Associators.

Sir Henry, soon after his return, made a feint of going up the North River, which caused General Washington to instantly move up in that direction too. With the extraordinary fatality which attended this war, the capture of an army in the South seemed only to have raised up another in the North. General Washington, who had been too weak all the winter to take advantage of the channels being frozen, was now stronger than ever, and the hostile armies amused one another for several weeks, neither side choosing to risk an engagement.

It was somewhere about this time that Colonel Beverley Robinson one day sent a message desiring Major Digby to step up to his quarters. Colonel Robinson had shown a friendly interest in Fred, ever since he had heard him deliver General Burgoyne's message to Sir Henry. He now asked him whether he had a mind to undertake an important service, whose nature he was not yet at liberty to disclose? The service, he added, involved some considerable risk—

"That, sir, will never deter me," said Fred cheerfully.

Colonel Robinson looked at him rather oddly, and bade him be at Sir Henry Clinton's quarters to-morrow, not later than ten in the morning.

Major Digby was there a good half-hour too soon, and it was another hour before he was sent for. Sir Henry was in the old Beekman House—a fine old Dutch mansion, belonging to a noted rebel.

When at last Major Digby was informed that Sir Henry would see him, he found the General standing by the fireplace, in a room beautifully decorated in blue and gold. He looked up on Digby's entrance, and then resumed his former attitude—his head bent, and his hands behind him. He was a short, rather ungainly man, with a countenance usually expressive of energy and resolution—but he now seemed both embarrassed and undetermined. He was so long before he spoke, and he appeared so much put out (to judge from several impatient movements of foot and hand which he made), that Fred was beginning to debate with himself the propriety of slipping out, and waiting until he should be summoned again, when Sir Henry said suddenly, and with only the glance of an instant towards the young Major,—

"It was you, sir, if I remember right, that brought the message to Fort Montgomery, from General Burgoyne?"

"Yes, sir," said Fred, with a blush of ingenuous modesty, which Sir Henry did not observe. There was another awkward silence. Sir Henry took a turn up and down the room, before he spoke again.

"I understand you are willing to be employed on a service of some danger?" he said at last, taking up his old position in front of the hearth. "Has Colonel Robinson spoke to you on the subject?"

"He only told me, sir, that there was a service to be performed, if any one could be found to be entrusted with it, and he asked me if I chose to have him speak to you for me."

"Then you have no idea of the nature of the service?"

"None whatever, sir."

"Have the goodness to shut the door," said Sir Henry. He threw himself into an arm-chair which stood by the table, and, pointing to another, bade Major Digby be seated.

"The fact is," he went on presently—evidently choosing his words with great care, "the service is of a somewhat delicate nature. You must allow me to observe, Major Digby," he added in a sterner tone than he had hitherto taken, "that not one syllable of this conversation must pass that door"—he pointed to the closed door as he spoke, and, pausing a moment, begged the Major just to step to it, and see that no one was listening.

"The utmost secrecy is necessary," he said, when Fred had reported the coast clear. "One single breath of suspicion will be enough to blast the whole thing; but if it succeeds, 'twill insure the reduction of the Colonies—and, I need hardly add, great rewards to all concerned in it."

Still Sir Henry seemed in doubt how to begin; and he even once more reminded Major Digby that he was upon his honour to reveal nothing, whether he undertook the service or no.

"I trust, sir, you do not doubt my honour!" exclaimed Fred, not a little hurt at this.

"Pooh! pooh! your honour—no! 'Tis your discretion I doubt. You are very young, sir"—here Sir Henry bent his bushy brows severely on Fred's ingenuous but somewhat troubled countenance—"and I doubt very hot-headed——"

Fred was just about to utter a respectful protest, when the

idea struck him that Sir Henry might be testing him, and that in any case, he would best prove he was not hot-headed by appearing as cool as possible.

"Um-m," grumbled Sir Henry. "I see you are not quite without self-control. You are very young, however——"

"I am full five-and-twenty, sir."

"Indeed! you hardly look it. Well, your youthful appearance may serve you here—that is, always supposing you can preserve your self-possession. You will need it, if you engage in this enterprise. The fact is," continued Sir Henry, trying the nibs of all the pens in the inkstand on his thumb nail, and every now and then glancing sharply at Digby, "we have reason to believe—no matter how—that there is an officer in the rebel army who is—who would—in short, who desires to enter into communication with us——"

"Do you mean, sir, that he wants to betray his party?" asked Digby, as Sir Henry seemed to hesitate for an expression.

"Tut, tut, my dear Major Digby, *betray* is not a word to use in this connection! If this was an ordinary war, you might call such a proposal by a hard name; but 'tis highly improper to apply such a word to an officer who regrets past errors, and wishes to return to his duty."

The Major said nothing.

"The name of the officer in question," continued Sir Henry, now seeming more at his ease, "is at present not certainly known to us—though, between ourselves, I may tell you that we have very little doubt as to his identity. If he is the person we imagine, he is in a position, or shortly will be, to render us very effectual assistance indeed. He is deep in the rebel councils—is a man of uncommon personal courage—and has on several occasions shown very considerable abilities in military affairs. His defection alone would be a very great blow to the rebel leaders. But if we accept his proposals, he can do a great deal more for us by remaining where he is, until a favourable opportunity offers of carrying out his plan. He, however, positively refuses to commit himself farther, until some accredited agent from our side is sent to negotiate with him in person."

Having said this much, Sir Henry paused, but presently added; "So stands the case at present; what do you say to it?"

Throughout the interview, Sir Henry had seemed in an irritable mood, and when Digby did not immediately answer he threw himself back, and bringing his fingers together, as his

elbows rested on the arms of his chair, beat an impatient tattoo with the tips—now and then throwing a dubious and not over-pleased glance over his right shoulder at Fred, on whom the full light from the window fell, while Sir Henry's own countenance was half in shadow.

"Well, Major Digby, what do you say?" he asked again. "Of course you understand that I tell you as little as possible at present. If you are entrusted with the mission, you will be put in possession of as much as we know ourselves—which, after all, is not so very much more than I have already told you. Have you nothing to say?"

"In what manner, sir, should I have to act?"

"I've told you—as my accredited agent to this officer."

"You surely, sir, don't mean that I shall go to him openly?" asked Fred, jumping at the hope that he had misunderstood Sir Henry.

"Of course not, man! 'Tis as much as this gentleman's life is worth, to be caught dealing with us! You don't seem to have took my meaning!"

"I'm afraid, sir, I did," said Fred—feeling the room begin to turn round, and surprised at the firmness of his own voice. "I'm afraid, sir, I understand that I am to go as a spy."

"And what if you are? Zounds, Major Digby, what are you thinking about? Have not all nations employed spies in war?"

"Yes, sir; and despised their own, and strung up the enemy's whenever they caught 'em."

"Pshaw! Major Digby, you talk like a schoolboy! I grant you, we despise a common spy—because we believe he will, for a sufficient consideration, alternately serve and betray both sides alike. But a gentleman—a British officer—who goes on a secret errand on his King's service, don't come, I hope, in the same category as a common spy! Of course, we should contrive some plausible errand, to account for your appearance where you're going——"

"May I ask, sir, where that may be?" said Fred. "I trust not to the camp at Middlebrook—for I have some acquaintance with a Boston gentleman, who is at present, I believe, with Mr. Washington's army, and he would infallibly recognise me—and would be very like to suspect a plot."

"Does he think you such a confounded deep fellow?" said Sir Henry, with a momentary relaxing of his frowning brows.

"No; 'twill not be to Middlebrook, I think. Mr. Washington hath shown himself such a stickler for regular procedure, that we might find it difficult to introduce you there under a decent pretext. No,—'tis to Philadelphia you would go in the first instance."

"May I ask, sir, what it is that the rebel officer means to do for us? I mean, will he merely try to sound his countrymen, and persuade 'em to make their peace with His Majesty? or is he really going to—betray 'em?"

"Betray 'em, sir! I've told you already that there can be no treason in his returning to his allegiance!" cried Sir Henry angrily. "The only treason is in his continuing in his rebellion. However, since you will have it, he intends to obtain a certain command—which his services fully entitle him to ask—and so to use it, that further resistance on the part of the rebels shall be hopeless."

Sir Henry had begun very testily; but as the full extent and results of the plan unfolded themselves to his imagination, he went on in a more persuasive tone—

"'Twould be a gross injustice to call such an act treachery. We will waive the consideration that the rebel cause is a bad one. 'Tis enough just now to consider that they must infallibly yield in the end, and that to hasten that conclusion will be to save rivers of blood, the laying waste of cultivated lands, and all the miseries of a protracted and hopeless war. If you look at it thus, you'll see that this gentleman is going to save his country—and I protest, Major Digby, I'm amazed that you see his conduct in any other light!"

"'Tis a pity but what he could have saved his country some other way, sir," said Fred respectfully. Sir Henry laughed.

"Pooh, pooh! you are high-flown! To cut the war short by three or four years—for in a country of so vast an extent as this, we shall have to cut off their armies in detail, and cannot do so without a vast expenditure of blood and treasure—surely this is a legitimate aim! And let me tell you, Major Digby, that there are gentlemen in this army that would jump at the opportunity of bearing a part in so glorious a result—there's a gentleman now, ready to go on his knees to me to send him. Come, come, sir, don't sit there mumchance! Speak out, and let's hear your sentiments!"

"If you command me to speak them, sir," said Fred—

dismally conscious that he was ruining his prospects by every word he said, and yet unable for the life of him to dress up an answer in a more politic form—"It seems to me, sir, that so far as glory goes, 'twill be said that when we wasn't able to beat 'em in the field, we got the better of 'em by underhanded dealings. This officer, whoever he may be, must be a rare scoundrel—and I confess 'twould grieve me to see His Majesty reduced to use so vile an instrument——"

"Upon my word, sir, His Majesty ought to be vastly obliged to you!" said Sir Henry snappishly. "You persist in regarding the rebels as ordinary belligerents! I protest, sir, your sentiments are scarcely loyal! Nay, do not interrupt me—I understand you feel an honourable scruple; but you must learn to look on the thing in its true aspect. His Majesty is mercifully inclined towards his rebellious subjects, and would rather convert them than destroy them. And as for beating 'em in the field, where, pray, have we not beat 'em? At Bunker's Hill, at Long Island, at the Brandywine, at Germantown—to say nothing of my own poor success just now—and I know not at how many more affairs, they've fled like sheep. Washington, 'tis true, cut off that drunken fool Rahl at Trenton—and every man-jack of the rebels clapped his wings and crowed, as if it had been another Minden! And poor General Burgoyne made a sad mess of it with his proclamations and his Indians. But 'twas his vanity undid him—if he would but have took the road by way of Fort George, as Baron Riedesel begged and prayed of him to do, his progress would have been easy. But he must needs force his way through the most difficult part of the country, by way of showing how invincible was his army."

"General Burgoyne, sir, always said as his instructions from home left him no choice as to route, and that ministers intended to strike terror by a successful march in spite of all obstacles," observed Fred—determined not to sit by and hear poor Burgoyne abused.

"At any rate," said Sir Henry, "the catastrophe which overtook that army may teach us not to rely exclusively on the fortune of war, or to be too nice in refusing to avail ourselves of other means. Perhaps you will think the matter over, Major Digby, and let me know in a day or two, if you feel inclined to undertake the business."

Digby had taken his leave, and was going along the

corridor which led to the staircase, when he saw Major André, who was coming along, cheerfully humming an air. Fred fancied that André looked at him with some curiosity, but he only greeted him in passing, and hurried on towards Sir Henry's room. Fred heard the General's voice bidding André come in, just as he himself began to descend the stair.

As André entered, and carefully closed the door behind him, Sir Henry merely turned his head.

"He's a thick-headed young fool, Jack," he said; "but he has wit enough to see that the business is a dirty one, and I have been talking myself hoarse in the vain attempt to persuade him to the contrary."

"Does he decline it, sir?" cried André, with a gleam of joy in his eyes.

"He will, I fear, decline. 'Tis a pity; for his dulness would certainly have disarmed suspicion. He has none of the hang-dog look of a conspirator, and——"

"And I am sure, sir, that I've as little, and you had better send me," said André persuasively. "The ladies tell me I have an ingenuous countenance—and I flatter myself I've rather more discretion than honest Fred Digby."

"I do not know, Jack," said the General, his stern features relaxing as he looked at André's boyish countenance. "Thou art but a boy, and—though thy brains are quick enough, Heaven knows—I'm loth, for thine own sake, to trust thee on such an enterprise."

"Only let me undertake it, sir, and I'll prove to you that youth can be discreet!" cried André gaily. "And I'm older than Digby, at any rate——"

"Ah, Jack, thy youth is of the sort that does not pass off with years," said Sir Henry kindly. He rose and paced up and down the room, while André anxiously watched all the changes of his countenance.

"Thus it shall be, Jack," said the General at last, after taking a good many turns. "If young thickhead will go, thou shalt have the honour of teaching him his lesson—after all, 'tis simple enough"—he added, in a lower tone—"merely to ascertain beyond a doubt whether our friend Mr. G—— is the person we take him for—how much he can and will serve us—and his price. That's the rock Digby will split on, Jack. He is an excellent young fellow, but too dull to grasp the situa-

tion, and see that no man can be a traitor for returning to his duty. If he went, he would scarce, I fear, conceal from Mr. G—— that he thinks him the scoundrel he hath just been calling him."

"'Tis an advantage taken in war!" said André eagerly. "And in the present instance, 'tis out of all comparison better that we should outwit the rebels, and, having got them completely in our power, grant 'em most of their demands, than that we should crush them by sheer force, and be hated by 'em ever after."

"My dear Jack, thy head is old, if thy face is young," said the General, laying his hand on the young man's shoulder. "If young high-flown don't swallow his scruples, thou shalt go, Jack! And yet I am loth to have thee go—I love thee, Jack, and I would not have thee come to harm."

"'Twill be easy, sir, to concoct such a plan as will render that impossible. I can think of a hundred pretexts this moment!"

"One will do, Jack, one will do," said Sir Henry, smiling at his eagerness, yet evidently uneasy. "'Twill be a ticklish business," he added thoughtfully; "there's the danger of a counter-plot to be guarded against—and young thickhead, I fear, could scarce be depended on to see through a nine-inch board. Yet I'm loth to risk thee, Jack. Well, let us to the business of the day."

When Major Digby presented himself to his Commander-in-Chief for the second time, it was with as near an approach to trepidation as a British officer can decently be supposed to feel. He was received by Sir Henry rather coldly.

"Well, Major Digby," he said, looking up from a letter which he seemed to be revising—for his pen was in his hand, "have you reflected on the subject of our conversation?"

"Yes, sir," said the unhappy Fred—who felt that Sir Henry meant to make the interview as difficult as possible.

"And what decision have you arrived at?"

Sir Henry asked this question merely for form's sake—he had read the answer legibly inscribed on the Major's too ingenuous countenance, from the first instant of his entering the room.

"I—I——" he stammered.

Sir Henry removed his eyes from Major Digby's facial struggles long enough to dip his quill in the ink-pot, and then

once more fixed them expectantly on that unfortunate young man.

"You have decided?" he said, with an ominous mildness.

"I—I——" stammered Fred again, and then broke out in desperation. "God knows, sir, if it was anything else, and the danger a hundred times greater, I would not hesitate an instant—but, dress up the situation as I will, sir, I see that I should be a spy, come to tamper with an officer's fidelity. I should betray myself—my sense of the vileness of my errand would unman me——"

"I understand you, Major Digby; you think if you was discovered, your neck would be in danger," said Sir Henry sarcastically.

"'Tis not that, sir—though of course no man wants to be hanged as has ever had the chance of being shot," protested Fred. "I think, sir, no General I ever had the honour to serve under thought me a coward—and if you would be pleased to send me on any service of a different nature—if 'twas to certain death"—here Fred was fairly overcome, and the tears ran out of his eyes—"you should see, sir, that 'tis not my life I value!"

"Come, come, do not distress yourself, Major Digby," said Sir Henry, touched, in spite of his vexation, by the young fellow's appeal. After all, he reflected, Digby would never have done—he was right there—he would infallibly betray himself. "I respect the delicacy of your sentiments, Major Digby," he said aloud. "And we all know your courage is above question. But all is fair in war, especially when that war is a wicked and obstinate rebellion. However, there's a gentleman of this army—whose honour I'm sure you would admit to be unimpeachable—who would, as I told you yesterday, go down on his knees for the chance you have refused, and I've no doubt but he will be employed on the business. I have only to remind you once more that *absolute* silence must be observed as to the whole matter—the slightest breath reaching Mr. Washington's ears would suffice to ruin the whole scheme."

"Perhaps I've been a fool," thought Fred, as he walked up and down Broadway that evening, in the lowest depths of melancholy. "It may be a good thing in the end. But if I was to meet Jasper Fleming, or Mary, when I was on such an errand, I should fairly die with shame."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IN WHICH MAJOR DIGBY'S IMAGINATION RUNS AWAY
WITH HIM.

COLONEL FLEMING took part in most of the indecisive movements around New York, during the summer of 1779. He wished to accompany the expedition to the Penobscot, but, fortunately for him, General Washington (who was always on the watch for a fair opportunity of attempting New York) desired him to remain with his regiment in the Jerseys. It was confidently expected that D'Estaing and Lincoln would soon take Savannah, and that the French fleet would then immediately sail for New York. Sir Henry Clinton hastily withdrew all the troops from Newport and the forts on the Hudson, and both sides anxiously awaited the result of the siege of Savannah.

By the time that result was known, the winter had set in; many of the Provincial regiments had broken up, their term of service being ended, and had gone their ways,—one to his farm, and another to his merchandise,—and it was evident that no more could be done that year.

Although it was almost hopeless to get a letter to Savannah, Althea wrote to her brother, as she had promised.

"Col. F.," she said, "has begged me to hurry things on—you'll understand me. My own mind is made up to wait, but Cousin Maverick will have me ask your opinion."

Mrs. Maverick would have been very angry if she had known that Althea said no more than this—but what can one say in a letter which, ten to one, will be opened and inspected by the Captain of the first British outpost it arrives at? Major Digby got his letter about a year after it was written, it having lain waiting for him most of that time in New York.

Colonel Fleming was several times in Philadelphia during the earlier part of the winter. He had come posting in, as soon as he heard of the Fort Wilson affair; and (although he soon found that Philadelphia was on the whole safe enough) he showed more temper in speaking of that disgraceful occurrence than Althea had ever seen him display—except about the yet more disgraceful affair of the Penobscot. But on this latter subject he said very little, out of delicacy to Althea, although

the little he did say showed pretty plainly what he thought of Saltonstall's dastardly conduct.

When not in attendance on General Arnold, Noel Branhholm was usually to be found at Mr. Lawrence Fleming's house in Pine Street. It was generally understood that Mary had refused Mr. Graydon's cousin—at any rate, that obtrusive young gentleman now seldom came. This circumstance was a great satisfaction to Noel, who had never thought him good enough for Mary, though he had some superficial accomplishments which pleased at first sight, and might take an inexperienced young woman's fancy.

Noel's own conversations with Mary (which were long and frequent, now that conceited young coxcomb had taken himself out of the way) usually concerned the wrongs of General Arnold. He talked much with Jasper on the same subject, and Jasper entirely agreed with him that Arnold had been shamefully used. Especially did the flagrant injustice of giving Gates all the honours of Saratoga move Jasper's indignation. He had quite as great a contempt for Gates as Noel himself had, and with as good reason—for if Gates had stolen Arnold's honours at Saratoga, he had plotted for years against Washington, his friend and comrade. Jasper even doubted his personal courage—partly influenced perhaps by Wilkinson's affair. "I believe if we was to search into it, we should find that one way or another he's contrived never to come under fire," said Noel. "They say Arnold exposes himself too much—Gates has took good care not to imitate him. When I hear him called the Hero of Saratoga, I can scarce contain myself!"

"He had something happen to him the other day, that I rather fancy must have made him feel awkward," said Jasper; and told his brother with huge gusto that he had lately had a letter from his friend Surgeon Thacher, with an account of an ensign in his regiment, who had been for some time very odd in his manner—wandering about, and talking very wild—sometimes breaking out into ranting appeals to Heaven—at others saying amazingly witty things, of which he was quite incapable in his ordinary state. One day, this poor fellow wandered up to General Gates's quarters, just as the General had done dinner, and, after making them all laugh with his oddities, suddenly clasped his hands, cast up his eyes, and devoutly prayed that Heaven would be pleased to pardon the General, for having tried to supersede that God-like man Washington!

"Thacher says Gates was monstrous disconcerted," said Jasper with infinite enjoyment, "and bade his aide get the poor fellow away as quick as he could. I wish I had been there to see it!"

In repulsing the attempt to surprise Washington's advanced posts in the Jerseys in the summer of 1780, Colonel Fleming was actively employed, his regiment being sent (along with General Branzholm's brigade) to support Greene, when the first attack was threatened on Springfield. On the second attack—although Greene was too weak to create a diversion in time to prevent the town being burned—the British force was glad to retreat instantly after that exploit; and was so hotly pursued that it did not venture to halt at Elizabeth Town, but crossed the same night to Staten Island.

By this time, the French were daily expected, and the misfortunes in the South had only made the North more in earnest. Flagging zeal revived. There is a something in the Anglo-Saxon race which makes it always do its best when hope is lowest—borrowing new courage from despair. The victorious British—of that race too—forgot this, along with all the other things that they forgot in this sad chapter of their story, and were always astonished when the rebels came on again after a reverse, more resolute than before.

Greatly to Noel Branzholm's surprise, General Arnold (who had lately been in a very despondent way) informed him one morning rather abruptly, that, finding himself still unfit for more active service, he had requested His Excellency to give him the command at West Point.

"Have you anything against it?" asked the General, still more curtly, seeing his secretary look rather blank.

"'Tis a strong post, sir," said Noel, "our strongest—and, with its dependencies, is most vital to us—but I should have thought, sir, as you would have chose rather to command a division in the field. You are now so much recovered——"

"'Tis torture to me to be long at a time on horseback, as you know very well," replied the General angrily, and no more was said.

* * * * *

De Ternay's fleet, with a force under the Count de Rochambeau, arrived early in July, with promises of a much larger armament, under De Guichen, to follow almost immediately. An expedition to Canada, under the Marquess La Fayette (who

returned to America with Rochambeau) was talked about; and things began to look very black for the British army shut up in New York. Major Digby's usually cheerful countenance became so downcast, that André rallied him on it. "I vow, Digby, I'll keep a register of the length of your phiz!" he said. "'Twill be as good as a barometer!"

Major André himself was in even better spirits than usual. He scoffed at the French, and he was just then engaged in making most admirable fun of the rebels. The redoubtable General Wayne (who surprised poor Johnson at Stony Point, last summer) had just been signally repulsed in an attack on a blockhouse at Bull's Ferry. Major André had composed a mock-heroic poem on this occasion, which was being published in *Rivington's Gazette*, and which he had called "The Cow-Chase," as the attack had had for its object to carry off some cattle.

"I've improved that verse about his Generalship's nag," says André. "Come, man, clear up that anxious brow, which don't become so ruddy a countenance as yours—and tell me if it don't run smoother now:—

' His horse that carried all his prog,
His military speeches,
His corn-stalk whisky for his grog,
Blue stockings, and brown breeches—'

What d'ye think of it?"

"Capital!" said Fred. "What a clever fellow you are, Jack!"

"I can't conjure a laugh out of you, though, to-day," said André. "What's got you, Fred? Afraid of the French? Hark ye, my dear boy, a word in your ear; I will give you a text of Scripture for your comfort: *a house divided against itself shall not stand*. Meditate on that, my dear boy, as the parsons say. 'Tis an inspired word."

"They've been falling out in Congress all through the rebellion, and I don't see as we've got much good of it," says Digby rather gruffly.

"We shall yet snap our fingers at 'em all! This is the dark hour before the dawn," says André, and looks mightily inclined to say more; but Fred for once does not encourage him. Ever since he declined to go on that mysterious business, he has had an instinctive desire to know no more about it. He cannot shake off an utterly groundless notion that that business is somehow fraught with calamity—persons whose

ordinary perceptions are rather dull do sometimes take senseless fancies into their heads, and Fred had done so in this case.

"For God's sake, Jack, don't tell me anything!" he cried in a sudden impulse. "If you refer to that business, I think I ought to tell you that—though God knows that warn't why I refused—I'm as certain as I stand here, that if I'd have gone something would have happened to me. And I'll tell you another thing,—mark my words, Jack,—whoever goes on that business will repent it! There's something tells me so—you may laugh if you will; but remember poor Stout. Didn't Stout say he should fall at the Brandywine? 'Tis a warning, Jack, and for God's sake, don't despise it!"

"Pooh, pooh!" said André, who had, however, paled a little, "are you turned dreamer? Is Saul among the prophets? You're hipped, my dear fellow! As for any risk in this affair—there was a thousand times more when I went into Charleston—not that they would have durst touch my person even there."

"'Tis my opinion, Jack, if you care to have it, as Mr. Washington durst do anything," said Fred solemnly. "But anyway, we're in a mess." To which André replied, that he saw Fred had never got over the effect of poor Burgoyne's disaster, but that that could never occur again.

Major André's hopeful views were very shortly confirmed. Instead of De Guichen's fleet appearing off Sandy Hook, there came news that he was gone home to France to refit his ships!

The wrath of the Provincials at this desertion, as it appeared to them, was very great. It was said that even His Excellency had expressed himself in no measured terms. As for General Arnold, he had always been against looking to France for aid, and, although deeply disgusted, he did not seem to be much surprised.

The General was just setting out for West Point, leaving his wife and her infant son to follow him, as soon as a house should be ready for their reception. He reached General Washington's camp, between Haverstraw and Tappan, just as the army was crossing the Hudson. His Excellency had determined to venture on attacking New York in concert with De Rochambeau, and was moving across the river in order to be ready. The last division was crossing—and presently they saw His Excellency himself on horseback watching the embarkation.

After the usual compliments had passed between them,

General Arnold asked His Excellency if any place had been reserved for himself?

"Yes; the post of honour—the left wing," says His Excellency. Noel looked at his General in triumph, as much as to remind him that now he would soon be able to silence his enemies for ever. But the General's face puzzled him. Noel would have said that it had fallen at His Excellency's words, if it had not been impossible to suppose such a thing. He understood it a little better, when, as they rode on together, the General complained that he still felt his wound very troublesome, and said that it would certainly not allow him for a long while to come yet to be many hours at a time in the saddle.

CHAPTER XXXV.

IMPORTANT SERVICES OF MR. JOSHUA H. SMITH.

I come ripe with wrongs.

VENICE PRESERVED.

WHEN he first came to West Point, General Arnold appeared to be much depressed in spirits. Noel attributed this partly to his wound, which still occasionally troubled him, and to the lameness which must be so peculiarly irksome to a man of unusual strength and activity; but still more to the fact that he allowed his mind to dwell on the public dishonour (for so he persisted in regarding the reprimand) which Congress had put upon him. As Mrs. Arnold had not yet arrived, the first few days were somewhat lonely, except for the visits paid and received by Counsellor Smith of Haverstraw. But the Counsellor—whose brother was Chief Justice of New York, and whose family were all in the Tory interest—was suffering from a sharp attack of ague, and was sometimes too much indisposed to come as far as headquarters—which were at Colonel Beverley Robinson's house, opposite West Point, and some eight or ten miles higher up the river than Haverstraw.

On evenings when Mr. Smith did not come, the General would beg Major Braxholm to give him his arm, and, leaning heavily on it, would walk for an hour or so on the high level plateau on which the house stood, whence there was a fine view up and down the river.

On these occasions, Noel usually played the part of comforter. He believed that the General's morbid state of mind was at least partially owing to his physical sufferings. At the time the charges were brought against him, he had been still sufficiently incapacitated for active exertion, to have ample leisure to brood over his wrongs, and Noel hoped that, now he was in a great measure recovered, he would regain his mental balance. For a day or two, however, he seemed more despondent than Noel had ever yet seen him. "I doubt I shall never be fit for active service again," he said one evening, as they paced slowly before the house-door. "Would to Heaven, I had died on Bemis' Heights! My enemies would perhaps have done me justice dead—and I should have been spared public dishonour——"

"A mere formal reprimand after all, sir; a bone flung by Congress to the Council," said Noel.

"But an indelible dishonour—and by a refinement of cruelty conveyed to me by the lips I honour most of all on earth. *Washington* was compelled to condemn me!"

"The hardest word he used, sir, was 'imprudence'——"

"An indelible dishonour all the same!" repeats the General passionately. "An injury which can no more be wiped out, than this crippled leg can be restored! I had better have let Townshend cut it off; I should have died in a day or two, instead of living to be a cripple—and dishonoured——"

"You walk better every day, sir," says Noel reassuringly. "Yesterday, you was three hours on horseback, and are none the worse of it to-day. In another month, you will be able to take the field. And if you walk a little lame, every step you take will remind your grateful countrymen of that glorious victory, which was chiefly due to your valour."

"And the credit of which was entirely given to that valiant hero, General Gates!" cried Arnold, with the most intense bitterness. "Whilst I was spilling my blood in the thick of the fight, he was safe in his tent, arguing with a dying man on the lawfulness of our cause! We shall see how he will distinguish himself in the South; *he* will, I fancy, scarce return thence with any honourable scars! Grateful countrymen, do you say? Nay, there's no gratitude in a democracy; republics have ever been ungrateful—and every step I take shall serve to remind me they are so!"

"Dear General, you are too bitter," said Noel—deeply distressed at seeing him in this temper. "Because Pennsylvania

has wronged you, will you forget all else? What General is more beloved than you, in all the army?"

"Yes, I think the soldiers would have followed me," said Arnold, with so poignant a regret in his tone that Noel was startled.

"I'm certain you're indisposed, sir," he said anxiously. "Have you walked too long? Does your wound hurt you?"

"No—except the one which rankles in my heart," said the General gloomily; and then, as if to turn the conversation, he added abruptly,—"Brantzholm, did you ever hear talk of the Duke of Marlborough?"

"Do you mean the great General, sir, that beat the French?"

"Yes; do you know no more about him than that?"

"I'm afraid, sir, I aint studied history as much as I should," said Noel modestly; "but I know he was a very great General, and won the battle of Blenheim——"

"Then you never heard that he was also a very great traitor?"

"No, sir! Was he really though? Who did he betray?" asked Noel, much amazed.

"He betrayed everybody he could," said Arnold with cutting emphasis. "He betrayed King James to King William; and then he tried to betray William back again to James. But he was, as you say, a very great General, and won the battle of Blenheim; so he was made a Duke, and was thought the greatest man in all England—and, as you see, his treasons are so entirely forgot, that you had never so much as heard of 'em."

"I always thought he was a very great man, sir, certainly," said Noel. "But if he was a traitor——"

"Pshaw! he only betrayed Kings—a sound republican need not waste sympathy on them," said the General, with an ironical sneer.

"I thought William the Third was a good King," said Noel, considerably perplexed by this new view of the great Duke; "and treason is always hateful—Dear sir, do let us turn back, I'm sure your leg hurts you, though you won't own it; you are turned so pale!"

"No, no, 'tis nothing. We will stand here a moment; I will rest a little on your shoulder."

As the General stood thus, his arm a little raised—as Noel was the taller—the latter was struck by the pain expressed in

his face. He still, however, refused to admit that he was suffering from anything but fatigue; but he presently himself proposed that they should return to the house.

It was a beautiful evening. Below them, the plateau sloped down, with rocky boulders and woody knolls, to Beverley Dock. Opposite, lay the fortifications of West Point; and the river, broadening out to north and south of the Point, lay like a flood of silver in the summer twilight. Behind the house, rose the great peak of the Sugar Loaf Mountain. All was silence, except for the occasional cry of a bird in the woods, and a human voice calling for the ferryman, and plainly heard through the clear air. A boat was just rounding the farthest point below, and coming up-stream.

"What a scene of repose!" said the General, stopping to admire it. "Who would think what tremendous forces—of human invention and human passions too—are sleeping among these peaceful-seeming hills! The place is a volcano—as quiet now as the summer's evening itself, but ready to break out in fire and smoke at any hour!"

"'Twas a pity the Council did not let me alone," he said presently. "I should not have troubled them long. If I had carried out my plan, I should have made West New York another Paradise, like Schuyler's. When I see this beautiful landscape, and think of what might have been, I tell you, Branhholm, my heart is like to break."

"It may all be yet, sir, when the war is over," said Noel earnestly. "You will yet show yourself as wise and indefatigable in settling up a country, as you have already shown yourself heroic in defending one."

"Never!" said Arnold. "Never now—'tis too late! You know not how those bitter drops of gall have poisoned all my blood. Men that have been so persistently pursued by injustice as I have been, know not what they do!"

"General Schuyler, sir, has been almost as hard used as you; his services have been great, and so have his losses—but he has been a mark for faction from the first——"

"Ah, he's a better man than I am," said the General, with a heavy sigh. "But he was not delivered over to the Council of Pennsylvania hounded on by Joseph Reed, and dragged to trial, when he was scarce able to stand for wounds received in his country's service." He spoke with the same intense bitterness which Noel had so often noticed in him of late. "And

yet," he added, in a calmer tone, and as if speaking to himself, "'twould be worse than all the rest, not to be able to meet Philip Schuyler's eye. Washington and he are of such absolute disinterestedness, that——"

He broke off, and taking Noel's arm again, they went slowly towards the house. "You have many friends, sir," said Noel, finding that he did not speak, and seemed to be lost in gloomy reflection. "General Schuyler has always stood by you; and 'tis well known that His Excellency himself has never listened to your enemies, and has always sought to do you justice. And Mrs. Arnold's devotion may surely go far to console you for the malice of a few envious detractors, jealous of your reputation."

"She's an angel; I do not deserve her!" said the General. "Branhholm, I am the most miserable wretch alive! Did you ever think what hell was like? I'll tell you. All hell's in those two words—*too late!* Too late! Too late, indeed!"

"How can it be too late, sir?" cried Noel, distressed and amazed at the General's agitation. "Was you not entirely acquitted of all but a slight indiscretion? And did not his Excellency expressly tell you, only a week since, that he has reserved the post of honour for you?"

"The post of honour! Oh, my God, the post of *honour!*" groaned the General. Then, as if ashamed of displaying so much passion, he calmed himself, evidently by a great effort, and said, wringing Noel's hand as he spoke,—“You have been the staunchest friend that ever man had—but you do not know—you cannot understand. I cannot rise to the heights of disinterestedness of which Washington and Schuyler are capable. I covet honour, and take it hard when my glory is given to another. And then—there's so much else—and all's said in that word I told you of—*too late—too late!* Oh, my God——”

The drops stood on his brow, and as his hand closed convulsively on Noel's, it was deathly cold. It was not the first time that Noel had seen such outbursts—the General was always accustomed to express his feelings pretty strongly—but there was a deep-seated despair to-night in every word and tone, which perplexed his faithful follower as much as it distressed him.

When they reached the house door, the General sat down under the verandah, confessed that his leg hurt him a little, and made an indirect apology for his unreasonable mood, observing

that, finding himself alone here, without Mrs. Arnold, he had allowed his mind to dwell too much on the past. "As soon as she comes, I shall be myself again," he said.

"Yes, sir," replied Noel. "And when we fight the great battle—it cannot be far off now—you will have the place you deserve, and lead us to victory!"

The General had covered his eyes with his hand, and did not seem to have heard. Nor did he see a slight, rather elegant gentleman, approaching from the path which led down to the Dock.

"Here comes Mr. Smith, sir; he must have thrown off his ague," says Noel, recognising the Counsellor's figure by the New York cut of his claret-coloured coat, long before he can see his face.

"I hope I see you well, General," says Mr. Smith, politely removing his hat as he comes up.

"Quite well, I'm obliged to you," replies the General. "Pray be covered, sir, and take a seat. Have you brought me any information?"

"Very little," says the Counsellor, carefully drawing a letter out of the pocket of his nankeen breeches. "Only this. 'Tis, I fancy, from a doubtful source, and not to be trusted to implicitly; but as to-morrow is my day for the shakes, I thought I'd wait upon you with it to-night."

Mr. Smith's manner was extremely polished, and though his sallow countenance showed the traces of sickness, there was nothing slovenly in either his dress or appearance.

The General took the letter which Mr. Smith presented to him, and begged Major Branhholm to have the goodness to send Colonel Varrick to him. Noel could not find Varrick, and returned to say so. By this time, the General seemed to have quite recovered his self-possession. Mr. Smith remained to supper; and the conversation very naturally turned upon the French alliance, about which the General expressed himself very strongly. It was, he said, impossible for a despotic monarch to be the sincere friend of a republic, and he ridiculed the French King—obliged to hob-nob with Dr. Franklin.

"'Tis an unnatural union," he said, "and you'll see that they will jockey us again with the army, as they did with the fleet. D'Estaing got us to equip him at Boston, and then set sail to plunder Granada, instead of going to Georgia to help his allies! Rochambeau and De Ternay, you'll see, will play us the same trick!"

"Depend upon it, Branhholm," said Varrick to him that

night, "the General has a plan in his head, which will make the British dance without a French fiddle to set 'em going. Did you notice his face, when he said at supper that 'twould be a shame if we had all the kicks and the French all the glory? Depend upon it, Smith has got him some information that will enable us to strike a blow at once!"

"I hope so," returned Noel; "but I know no more than you do. The General never says much of what is to be, though he will talk so freely of what has been. Of course he wants to fight—but I fancy for his own sake he would rather it was not just yet—not till he is more recovered. He does not send orders from his tent, like some Generals we know—he leads the attack sword in hand."

"He sat his horse perfectly well yesterday—I watched him carefully," said Varrick. "Oh, for one more day like Saratoga, with him to lead us on!"

"You may say that," cries Noel, kindling. "With Arnold to lead us, we can't be beat! But I wish he may not put much confidence in Smith—I distrust the man, with his oily manners and slippery tongue—and he is besides too nearly related to our enemies."

"For that matter, some say the General is," says Varrick, smiling. "Though who that looks at Mrs. Arnold can remember she was a Tory? But we all think the General tells you more than he does anybody else, and if you don't know, you may rely on it, Smith don't."

"He as good as hinted to me that he did not," replied Noel; "he said to me one day, 'I use Smith, because he is the best hand at getting information, but he carries the letters of Bellerophon, so far at least as not to know what's in 'em.'"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HIS EXCELLENCY CROSSES THE HUDSON.

THE General's spirits revived a good deal, as soon as he had sent for Mrs. Arnold, which he did the very next day. He was extremely anxious about her journey, and took a deal of trouble in making out an itinerary—telling her how far to travel each day, and where to stop each night—and beseeching her above everything not to fatigue herself.

Meantime, very bad news was received from the South. Congress had appointed General Gates to that command, when Lincoln was made prisoner at Charleston. He had hardly taken the field, when Lord Cornwallis fell in with him near Camden, on the great Santee River, and totally routed him, with the loss of all his cannon and baggage. Gates had fled, his army was destroyed, and Tarleton was in hot pursuit of Sumter. It was but natural that, on this news coming, General Arnold should have made some cutting remarks at the expense of the unlucky Gates—especially as that hero had crowed somewhat too loud on his arrival in the South, as though the victor of Saratoga had but to come, and see, and conquer. But these reverses made it all the more necessary to do something in the North; and early in September the General told Noel that His Excellency (who had recrossed, and was now at Tappan) would be coming in a few days to see Count Rochambeau at Hartford. “And then,” he added, “the blow will be struck.”

The General had a scheme in his head for establishing signals as near the enemy's posts as possible. So bold had the news of Camden made Sir Henry Clinton, that a British sloop-of-war had come up the Hudson to within five miles of Verplanck's Point. The General went down in his barge on this errand of the signals, and was a night away, sleeping at Mr. Smith's. On his return, he said that he had been fired on from the British gun-boats, and had had a very narrow escape. He particularly regretted this, as it had prevented his seeing Colonel Beverley Robinson, who had come down to the opposite side of the river, hoping for an interview. Colonel Robinson's property had been confiscated on his taking the British side, and his object in seeking this interview was to try to recover at least a part of it.

The whole affair caused the General some annoyance, as well as a good deal of trouble. On the very day that His Excellency was expected, he went down the river again; this time Major Branzholm accompanied him. At Verplanck's Point, a flag came up from the *Vulture*—the British ship-of-war—with a letter addressed to General Putnam, “or the officer commanding at West Point,” so the General of course opened it, and found that it was another letter from Robinson, very urgently entreating an interview.

“I really cannot oblige him by giving up my head-

quarters," says Arnold, looking rather bothered. "Why don't he apply to Congress? They've got plenty of time to attend to him!"

The General took his own barge across to the Ferry, to fetch His Excellency, who had with him the Marquess La Fayette, just returned from France. To Noel's great joy, Jasper was there too, His Excellency having brought him, because he was so well acquainted with Long Island—where it was pretty certain the French force was to land, though of course this was not talked about openly. They dined at Haverstraw, at Mr. Smith's—who was all urbanity. After dinner, General Arnold took an opportunity of laying Colonel Robinson's letter before His Excellency, and asking him whether he thought he might go and hear what Robinson had to say?

"Certainly not," replies His Excellency, glancing over the letter. "'Twould be a very improper thing for the commander of a post to meet any one himself. Send a trusty messenger—Major Branzholm, for instance—if you think any end will be served. But this is a matter for the civil authorities."

Very soon after dinner, they went down to the river, where the barge was waiting. Noel fell behind with his brother, and had so much to ask about Philadelphia (where Jasper had been later than himself), that he heard no more of the conversation between the Generals.

As the barge got well beyond mid-stream, they could see the *Vulture* round the next point.

"That's close quarters," says Jasper, taking Noel's glass, and looking at her. "She can't be more than six or seven miles down. I wish His Excellency may not be running any risk, in coming out here with so small an escort."

"To hear you talk, no one would think how daring you was, brother," said Noel; and Jasper, returning him the glass, observed that he certainly was not daring where His Excellency was concerned.

"If anything should happen to him, we've no one to take his place," he added, still looking uneasily at the *Vulture*. "There's a movement on board of some kind; can you make out what it is?"

By this time, His Excellency was looking too. As he slowly turned his glass, the Marquess said to General Arnold,—

"My General, since you have a correspondence with the enemy, you must find out for us from those gentlemen what has become of De Guichen."

"What do you mean, Marquess?" says the General, not quite pleased at this joke, and with unmistakable anger in his tone.

"He's like that, ever since the court-martial," whispered Noel to his brother. "I sometimes fear 'twill break his heart."

"He'll forget it, when he commands the left wing at New York," says Jasper—almost gaily. "He is to have it—His Excellency told me so. Cheer up, brother! Four years ago, this very day, all seemed lost; but now, even I think a happy end is very near!"

They were at the landing in another moment, and Noel, as he took leave of his brother, said that he supposed by their next meeting it would all be arranged.

"His Excellency is to visit West Point on his return—what joy 'twill be to see you there!" he cried, as he pressed his brother's hand. "There's always something wanting when you're away—I'm but half myself without you!"

"We shall be back in a week, dearest brother," says Jasper. "Keep up a good heart—believe me, there's more justice in the world than you think. Remember the cabal, and how it fell apart like a house of cards!"

And so His Excellency and the Marquess, with their staffs, rode off, and General Arnold went back to headquarters, hardly speaking a word by the way—except to say that he should never be easy until we had done leaning on France.

As soon as he got back, the General wrote a letter to Colonel Robinson, and was desiring Major Branhholm to send him a lieutenant to go with it in the flag-boat, when Noel offered to take it himself.

"You!" says the General—Noel fancied, a little displeased. "But why not, if you choose? There can be no danger."

"Not the least, with a flag, sir," says Noel.

As Noel came under the ship's side, he saw Colonel Robinson (whom he recognised from having seen him often before he went to England, but who did not know him), leaning over the side.

"Who commands at West Point, sir?" asks the Colonel, as he takes the letter.

"General Arnold, sir."

"Indeed? I thought it had been General Putnam," observes the Colonel, opening the letter, and casting his eyes over it.

"Pray, present my compliments to General Arnold, sir, and tell him I'm obliged to him for the trouble he has given himself on my account."

The General went down to Mr. Smith's at Haverstraw next morning, in somewhat better spirits—it was possible that Mrs. Arnold might get there that afternoon, on her way to West Point. He did not return until next day. As he hoped, Mrs. Arnold had arrived, and he brought her and the child with him in his barge—Peggy in raptures at the beauty of the Hudson, which, on a fine September day, was indeed a fair and noble river.

She brought letters and messages for Major Branhholm from Philadelphia, and the dreary house brightened up amazingly, and became quite a cheerful place, the moment she set foot in it. They were quite a gay party at supper—in the middle of which Mr. Smith came in—on his way down, he said, from Fishkil, whither he had been taking his family for a few days' visit.

"Is that not rather a sudden idea, Mr. Smith?" asks Peggy. "Mrs. Smith said nothing about going away this morning."

To which Smith rejoined that it was a somewhat sudden notion—at least, 'twas an old invitation, but he had made his wife go at this particular time, because, with things so uncertain, and a British sloop so near Haverstraw, 'twas just as well to be a score or so of miles higher up the country.

At this Franks and Varrick exchanged looks with Noel, by which it was easy to see that they were not at all sorry to hear Mr. Smith say things were in an uncertain state.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A BOAT TO GO TO THE *VULTURE*.

COLONEL ROBINSON evidently thought he could impose on General Arnold's good-nature to any extent. A very little after sunrise next morning—indeed, before the General was up—a man (who said his name was Sam Cahoun, of Haverstraw) came to headquarters with a letter from Mr. Joshua Smith. So at least he said; but the letter proved to be from the Captain of the *Vulture*, complaining that Colonel Robinson had

been fired on, as he was coming off from the ship with a flag to wait on General Arnold.

The General told Major Branhholm these particulars, and added that he wondered what Robinson meant by "waiting upon him." "How can I possibly see him," he asked, much annoyed, "when His Excellency expressly recommended me not? I shall send Smith—Smith is a lawyer, and will be a match for him. However, Smith has given me an inkling of some most important information he thinks he can obtain for me, and I believe I can use Robinson's affair to mask the other."

The General said no more, and of course Noel did not ask anything. The same man came up again in the afternoon, with another note, and shortly afterwards the General went across the Ferry, and Noel saw him mount his horse and turn in the direction of Haverstraw.

General Arnold found Mr. Smith quite alone—his family having gone, as he had said, to Fishkil. The General began at once upon the object of his coming—Smith must go to the *Vulture* to-night, to bring off a person whom it was absolutely essential he should see without delay.

"Surely, General, Colonel Robinson's affairs can wait our convenience?" says Mr. Smith. "'Twas my bad day yesterday—though I did go to Fishkil—and I really aint fit——"

"It must be done—and I can't go myself, after His Excellency's express opinion that 'twould be improper," replied the General. "There's more than Robinson in it—but his business will serve to blind the people of the *Vulture*, and to-night's the time. Trust me to make it worth your while."

"Oh, General, 'tis not that," says Mr. Smith delicately. "But the risk——"

"Risk? pooh! go at night, and if you're challenged by our guard-boats, show your pass."

After some demur, Mr. Smith, finding the General is set upon it, goes out to try and find some one among his tenants to row the boat. The first man he sees is Sam Cahoun.

"Wa'al, Squire, I don' know—I was just a-gwine to fetch the cows"—says Sam doubtfully, when Mr. Smith desires him to come and speak to General Arnold.

When the General had explained what he wanted, Sam shook his head. The job would pretty well take all night, he said—and he had been up all last night—and besides, the guard-boats was out.

"Look you, my man," says the General, bending on him one of those dark looks which few men have been found to resist. "If you're a friend to your country, you'll go."

"I'll go to-morrow, if that'll do," mumbles Sam, wishing himself twenty miles off.

"It must be to-night. To-morrow will be too late for my purpose."

"And then, I can't go alone—the boat's too heavy—and comin' back, we shall have the stream agin us," says Sam; but Mr. Smith suggests that he can go and fetch his brother.

Sam went off very unwillingly, and when he came back, Mr. Smith almost gave up hope. Sam's brother did not like it—and above all, his wife did not like it—there were guard-boats out——

"Guard-boats be d——d!" cries the General angrily. "You've done nothing but harp on them all the time, man! If you don't go, I shall look on you as a disaffected man!"

"Better harp on 'em nor hev 'em put a shot through you," mutters Sam surlily, shifting from one leg to the other.

But however determined Sam Cahoun was not to go, General Arnold was a great deal more determined that he should go. The General had already promised him fifty pounds of flour, and he now sent for the brother—who, however, at first seemed more obstinate than Sam. They were both homely farming-men, lean and sunbrowned; but the brother (whose name was Joe) was the more quick-witted of the two, and he needed a deal of persuasion before he would consent to steal off under cover of darkness, on an errand which could, he fancied, be done just as well by day.

"Well, Joe Cahoun, I hope you're going to oblige the General," says Mr. Smith, meeting him just outside the house. "Just sit down a moment on this bench, and listen to me, and I'll explain it to you." There was a little rustic table in the porch, with bottles and pewter mugs upon it.

"Take a tot, Joe; take a tot, Sam," says Mr. Smith, mixing them each a dram. "'Tis a warm day, and talking's dry work. As for this business, there's no danger in it whatever. I've got a pass from General Arnold—here 'tis—look at it—to go at any time of night or day. And to prove to you that I'm in the confidence of headquarters, I'll tell you in your ear that the countersign for to-night is *Congress*—I know I can trust you."

"You can trust me, Squire," says Joe—fidgeting about in a pair of soiled shirt-sleeves, and then suddenly resting his bristly chin in the hollow of his hand, and appearing to be feeling how many days old his beard is—while Sam stands by in silence, looking as if he didn't like all this, but didn't know what to say to it. "You can trust me, Squire, right enough," repeats Joe, working away at his chin all the while. "You can trust me—but that aint the p'int; the p'int is, why must you go by night? Why can't a flag go by day?"

"Why, you owl, d'ye think we want all the country to find out how we get our information?" says Mr. Smith, provoked. "A thing that's known is sure to get talked about. We don't want the privates to know anything about this. Look ye here, Joe, aint I a friend to the country? Aint you always heard so?"

"Oh, yes, Squire, I've heerd so," replies Joe, grinding his chin harder than ever, and displaying a row of long yellow teeth; "but there's your brother's a rank Tory—and don't yer see——"

"Can I help what my brother is? Who is there that aint got a brother, or a cousin, or a something or other, a Tory, I should like to know?" says Mr. Smith tartly. "The General's whole plan depends on getting this information to-night. Just stop there a minute, while I go up and speak to him."

In about ten minutes, the General himself came out. He walked slowly and heavily, and his manner was very thoughtful, and a little absent.

"Mr. Smith tells me you don't like the secrecy," he said, sitting down opposite Joe, and looking very hard at him. "There must be secrets in war, as you know very well. However, so far as that goes, the officers at the Ferry and the Captain of the water-guard, know all about this affair, and Major Kierce was to have sent me a boat if he could—'tis his failure brings us to you."

"Wa'al, Gen'ral," says Joe, getting up and slowly straightening out his back, "I'll go. I don't like the job, but I'll go."

And (while the General returns indoors with Mr. Smith) the other two go off to make arrangements, and get a sheep-skin to muffle the oars.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ADVENTURES OF MR. JOHN ANDERSON.

WHEN Mr. Joshua Smith stepped into the boat, waiting for him at the creek with his two unwilling watermen, night had fallen on the hills of the Highlands. There was no moon and no wind; not a ripple broke the broad bosom of the Hudson. Here and there, far up in the hills, a light gleamed in some solitary house; but these were few and far between—all on earth was dark, and only heaven was full of eyes.

"We are lucky to have no moon!" observed Mr. Smith, as the men settled to their oars. But Sam Cahoun only grumbled something about the tide being against them, both going and coming; and Joe added that it was a pity but Mr. Smith had not put on a dark greatcoat, as that white one of his would to a dead certainty bring out the guard-boats after them.

No such thing happened, however. The muffled oars rose and fell, and the hills lay dark and silent on either side. They had passed the Clove, and could make out the hull of the sloop, as she lay just above Teller's Point.

"Row on, as if you meant to pass her," whispered Mr. Smith, who was steering; but the *Vulture* hailed them.

"Who goes there?" cried a voice from the deck.

"Friends—going from King's Ferry, and bound for Dobbs' Ferry," answered Mr. Smith, and was immediately ordered alongside; and the tide running so strong that the boat did not at once obey, the officer of the watch threatened to blow them out of the water, if they did not haul alongside that instant.

"You shall be answerable, sir, for delaying me!" cries Mr. Smith angrily, loud enough to be heard at Teller's Point—so loud, that a boy comes up from the cabin to say that whoever it is, is to come below and speak to the Captain.

Mr. Smith on this goes up the ship's side, and is taken down to the cabin, where he finds the Captain lying ill in his berth, and with him a gentleman in regimentals, who politely begs Mr. Smith to be seated.

"I come, sir, with a message to Colonel Beverley Robinson," begins Mr. Smith.

"I am he, sir," says the polite gentleman. "Allow me, sir,

to present you to Captain Sutherland. Have you come alone, sir?"

"Quite alone, Colonel, except for the men that rowed me," replies Smith. "I believe, sir, I'm to take a gentleman ashore."

"To tell you the truth, sir, I expected another person. I've not the honour, sir, of knowing whom I'm addressing——"

"I am Joshua Hett Smith, sir, of Haverstraw," says Smith, bowing politely.

"Brother, I believe, to Mr. Justice Smith—I am happy, sir, to make your acquaintance"—here the Colonel politely bows. "You'll excuse me, sir, for saying I'm a little surprised to see you. I fully expected—but no matter. If you'll excuse me, sir, I'll be with you again directly."

While Colonel Robinson is gone, Mr. Smith takes the opportunity of complaining to the Captain about the firing on flags of truce, and is still on this subject when Robinson returns, bringing with him a young gentleman whom he introduces as Mr. John Anderson.

"I am indisposed myself," observes the Colonel, "but Mr. Anderson will do as well—he is to represent me entirely in the business."

Mr. Anderson is all ready for his midnight expedition, dressed in a large blue watch-coat, which hides everything but a pair of handsome white top-boots. He is a fair young man, with very lively blue eyes, and he steps lightly down into the boat, seeming rather glad to get away from Robinson, who hovers about him, evidently in a terrible fidget.

"I shall be back in the morning, Colonel, before you're out of your berth—trust me for that," he says, shaking him by the hand. Then he skips down into the boat, which is bobbing up and down on the flood-tide, so that Sam and Joe Cahoun have to stand up all the while and keep her off the ship's side with their hands.

Not a word was said as they rowed to shore. They landed at the foot of the Long Clove, a steep cliff covered with thick bushes. Some one was moving in these bushes, and Smith, begging the stranger to wait there an instant, went up the bank. He returned almost immediately. "You'll find Mr. G—— up there," he said in a very low voice; and the stranger went up, while Mr. Smith asked the men to wait and take him back to the ship.

But this both Joe and Sam refused point-blank. They were tired, they had been up all the night before, and rest they must have. Finding them obstinate, Mr. Smith had the boat made fast, and took them up to his house, where they soon forgot the toils and dangers of the night, in the sleep of the labouring man.

Mr. Smith, however, did not feel at liberty to go to bed, while there was Mr. John Anderson to be got back to the *Vulture*. Although the night air was telling cruelly on his ague, an hour or so before dawn he saddled his horse, and rode down to the Clove, where he found Mr. Anderson still in close confabulation with Mr. G——.

"'Tis of course too late for Mr. Anderson to return to the sloop," observes Mr. Smith, when he has threaded his way through the thick bushes. "And 'tis high time you came up to my house. The day is beginning to break, and people will be about."

"I've still much to say to Mr. Gustavus," says Mr. Anderson, "so perhaps we were best do as you propose."

It is still so dark, that Mr. Anderson cannot see the features of Mr. Gustavus, but as they go towards their horses, there is just light enough to see that he is lame, and walks on the rough ground with a good deal of difficulty.

"Take my servant's horse, Mr. Anderson," says Mr. Gustavus. As they ride up the four miles to Mr. Smith's house, a sentinel challenges them, and Mr. Gustavus gives the word.

"Good God ! am I within the American lines ?" says Anderson, in a low voice to Mr. Gustavus.

"You will be perfectly safe at Haverstraw," returns Gustavus. "'Tis but one day's detention—to-night you shall return."

Just as they arrived at Mr. Smith's (by which time it was broad dawn), they heard firing in the direction of Teller's Point.

"That's cannon !" exclaims Anderson. Mr. Gustavus—there is light enough now to see that he is no other than General Arnold himself—seems annoyed, and says he has no doubt it is Livingston firing at the sloop—he sent up yesterday to ask for some four-pounders on purpose, "which," he adds, "I did not give him." They can see the *Vulture* from the windows of Mr. Smith's house—which command a magnificent prospect.

"Good God ! she's aground !" cries Anderson, turning very

pale. No one else speaks, until the General says—after what seems an age of watching——

"They've got her off—just in time. That was a narrow squeak."

They watch the sloop, putting about and falling farther down stream.

"This is an unlucky hitch," says the General, taking Smith aside. "I've still a great deal to hear from him, however. See that we are not disturbed. You must keep him till night. I must be at headquarters by ten, and after that I charge you with him."

"What is he?" asks Smith. "He looks a mere boy. I wonder they sent such a soft young fellow on such a ticklish errand."

"He's a clever fellow in his way," replies the General. "He's a merchant—but, as you see, he must needs borrow a uniform from an officer in New York, to make himself look like a soldier."

Mr. John Anderson is still anxiously watching the *Vulture*, when Smith goes away to snatch a little sleep, and leaves them together, promising to return before the General goes.

When he comes back, the table is strewn with papers.

"One moment, Mr. Smith, and I am done," says the General—giving him a look, which Mr. Smith takes as a hint to retire again.

At last, however, the General is ready. By this time, Mr. Smith has something to tell him—he has sent down and ascertained that Colonel Livingston has undoubtedly driven the *Vulture* down the river, and Mr. Anderson must return to New York by land. Besides the danger of getting in the way of a cannon-ball, the alarm has been given, the guard-boats are all on the alert in good earnest now, and 'twould be impossible to pass them.

"I'll ride half the night with him over land, but I'll not try the water, now the alarm's given," concludes Smith, who has got his ague upon him, and is shaking from head to foot. "We must cross from King's Ferry to Verplanck's."

At this the General looks very strange. "Oblige me, Mr. Smith, by leaving Mr. Anderson and me alone for a few moments," he says, biting his lips.

It is full an hour before the General calls him back, and when he comes, he perceives that both Mr. Anderson and the

General are a good deal excited. Mr. Anderson's manner is more resolute than at first, but he is much flushed; and the General has an air of annoyance—as near to uneasiness as Mr. Smith has ever observed in him.

"If you really can't get off by water—but you must try it, Smith," he says—and then turning suddenly to Anderson, exclaims that the risk is too great.

"I think, sir, as I've already said," says Anderson boldly, "I ought to be judge of that. I accept the risk."

The General looks from him to Smith, and from Smith to him again. "Then you must change that coat, Mr. Anderson," he says very decidedly. "Mr. Smith will lend you a coat—he's much about your size. I've drawn you up a route—remember above all, *not* to go by way of Tarrytown! You've got my pass."

Having reiterated these injunctions, and made Mr. Anderson promise to sacrifice his borrowed martial plumes, the General departs, leaving Anderson to admire the prospect, and wish himself once more safe aboard the *Vulture*.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

FURTHER ADVENTURES OF MR. JOHN ANDERSON.

MR. ANDERSON was persuaded to get into a tight-bodied coat of Mr. Smith's, which had been handsome when new—it was claret-coloured, and the button-holes were worked in gold tinsel—but was now worn rather threadbare. With this garment over his nankeen waistcoat and breeches, a pair of thread stockings, and a small round tarnished beaver, he looked more like a reduced gentleman than a New York merchant. His light hair was unpowdered, and merely tied in a queue with a plain ribbon. Mr. Smith surveyed him carefully.

"Your boots, sir, don't quite match the rest of your costume," he observed; but Mr. Anderson vowed he could not change them. Then he put on his watch-coat over all, and said that he was ready.

Mr. Smith took a negro servant with him, and at a little past six o'clock they all set out.

A little before they reached Stony Point (where the King's Ferry crosses the Hudson), they overtook a gentleman, who

proved to be Major Burroughs, to whom Mr. Smith casually said that he was going up to West Point for Mrs. Smith, and invited him to Haverstraw to tea next afternoon.

"Nothing like putting a bold front on it," says Smith to Anderson, as they are riding on. "We must not seem too much engrossed in our own affairs."

For all this, however, Mr. Smith rode at a good pace, and they got to King's Ferry by the time it was dark. On the way down to the landing-stairs they passed a marquee, where some officers were drinking.

All this while, every step they took was carrying Mr. Anderson farther away from his destination. It was no doubt the irksome sense of this which made him so dull and uneasy. And when Mr. Smith observed, on nearing this temporary way-side tavern, that these would be Colonel Livingston's officers over from Verplanck's, the information did not raise Mr. Anderson's spirits. But for Colonel Livingston, Mr. Anderson would at this very moment be rowing comfortably down towards the *Vulture* instead of being compelled to make this tedious and perilous circuit by land. He would not go in with Smith—he rode on down towards the Ferry stairs—hearing, as he did so, a chorus of voices greeting Smith.

"Why, Jo Smith," calls one, holding out a bowl, "is that you? Won't you drink?" But as the bowl is empty, Mr. Smith calls for some refreshment on his own account, and dismounts to drink it.

"What do you think, Daddy Coolley," he asks his somewhat inhospitable friend, "of our being in New York in three weeks' time, eh?"

"I'm afraid not, Master Joshua," returns the other, shaking his head. "If we're there in three months, I reckon we may think ourselves lucky."

"Corny Lambert," says Mr. Smith to a waterman who is loafing in the tent, while his grog is being mixed, "I want to go over to Verplanck's, and I'm in a hurry. Get your men, and be putting our horses into the boat, will you?"

Just at this instant, Colonel Livingston himself comes out of the marquee, and asks Mr. Smith to come in and have supper.

"I can't, I thank you, Colonel," returns Smith, swallowing his grog. "I've got a gentlemen with me that's pressed for time—he's rode on now."

"Fetch him back, and both of you stay to supper," says

Livingston—who little imagines how ill a turn he did the gentleman this morning.

Mr. Smith excused himself again, and in answer to a question, said that he was going up to General Arnold's headquarters, whereupon Livingston begged him to take charge of a letter to the General.

The ferrymen had by this time shipped the horses, and Mr. Smith found Mr. Anderson impatiently waiting for him on the stairs. Smith was all the better for that sip at the flowing bowl. He was quite jovial as they crossed; he joked with the boatmen, and promised them something to revive their own spirits. Mr. Anderson sat silent at the side—and made no answer, even when Smith stepped aft to whisper to him that the river was the Rubicon—they were all right now.

Arrived at the other side, Mr. Smith was as good as his word—he gave Corny Lambert an eight-dollar bill, which, even allowing for Colonial money being depreciated to half its value, was very handsome pay.

They mounted their horses again, and had ridden about eight miles from Verplanck's, when they were stopped by the sentry at an outpost of Sheldon's Light Dragoons. Mr. Smith asked who commanded the party, and was informed that it was Major Boyd.

"Who wants me?" says the Major himself, overhearing the question, and coming out of the guard-house.

"I am Joshua Smith, Major; I live in the white house on the other side King's Ferry, and am going to Major Strang's," says Mr. Smith quite glibly.

"Major Strang is not at home, sir," rejoins the Major. It is by this time between eight and nine o'clock, and quite dark.

"Dear me, how very unfortunate!" exclaims Mr. Smith, and then, after thinking for a moment, he adds to his companion,—“I'll tell you what we'll do, then—we'll go to old Colonel Gil Drake's; he's an old friend of mine, and will, I'm sure, give us a bed for to-night.”

"He don't live where he did—he's moved to Salem," observes Major Boyd.

"May I ask the favour of a word with you, Major?" says Smith mysteriously. "I'm on General Arnold's business," he whispers, "and must press on. The gentleman with me is a person going to White Plains, to meet a gentleman on public business. He's got a pass from the General."

The Major gets a light to look at it, remarking that they had better sleep at Andreas Miller's at Crompound, close by—the roads are dangerous at night.

"We must do it," whispers Smith to Anderson. "I'm dead beat. I said I'd ride half the night; but 'tis pretty hard on a man with a tertian ague on him, I can tell you!"

As Major Boyd is carefully examining the pass, Mr. Anderson asks him the best way to go to White Plains.

"Not by Tarrytown," replies the Major, returning the pass. "There's been a party of between twenty and thirty cowboys heard of over that way, within these last few days. Go by North Castle Church."

"Depend upon it, you'd better follow the General's directions," says Smith, as they ride on to Andreas Miller's; "you can't improve upon 'em."

Mr. Anderson, who has hardly said a word all the way, does not answer. He is, thinks Smith, in a sad funk, for all he is so fond of going a-masquerading in his friends' uniforms. They sleep together in the same bed, and what with Smith's ague and Mr. Anderson's restlessness, they neither of them get much sleep.

With the first streaks of dawn, Anderson has Smith up, and they ride on to Pine's Bridge, where, a little beyond, the roads diverge to North Castle and Tarrytown.

"You're fairly in the Neutral Ground now, Mr. Anderson," says Smith; "we've passed our lines; there's no more patrols, nor guards, nor sentinels to stop you now."

"Thank Heaven for that!" cries Mr. Anderson in a tone of the most profound relief. "I protest, I was never so uneasy in my life, as I've been ever since I heard that confounded cannon fired by your Colonel what's-his-name at Verplanck's! It sounded in my ears like a funeral-bell! I really wouldn't have believed it possible I could have been so fanciful! 'Tis a misfortune, I really think, to possess an imagination—one conjures up a thousand disagreeable images, and suffers a thousandfold more, I'm convinced, than the common mind. I've a friend in New York, now, that would, I'm convinced, have gone through last night's adventures with a thousandfold more stoicism than I! A brave, honest fellow, without a particle of imagination——"

Here Mr. Anderson checked himself, as though struck by some sudden thought, and seemed for a moment a little damped. But he recovered himself immediately.

"'Tis amazing," he said, "how a sentence or a word will sometimes recur to the mind, and assume an importance out of all proportion to its merits. This very same unimaginative friend of mine once said a thing to me which, was I inclined to be superstitious, might have caused me considerable apprehension, had I happened to recollect it while I was within your lines. Well, sir, what say you to breakfast? I feel a something here that cries cupboard, and I fancy you must be fainting."

"We might get something at Mrs. Underhill's," returns Smith—quite amazed at this sudden transmogrification of Mr. John Anderson into a gay talkative young gentleman.

Mr. Anderson's high spirits almost made Mr. Smith forget his ague. Mrs. Underhill gave them but a frugal repast; but Mr. Anderson so enlivened it with his conversation on poetry and literature, that Mr. Smith began to think him a very superior young man indeed.

"Here, I think, I may safely leave you," says Smith, when he has seen Mr. Anderson nearly to the fork of the roads. "I shall tell Mr. Gustavus that I left you within hail of your friends."

And so, with mutual compliments, thanks, and apologies—and reminders on Smith's part to be sure and take the road to the left—they part, and Mr. Smith and his servant ride back towards Crompound, while Mr. Anderson goes on to the meeting of the roads, and pauses there, considering whether it would not be better after all to go by Tarrytown? The cowboys are on the Tory side, and, upon the whole, he would be rather glad than sorry if he *did* fall in with them. Better at any rate than falling in with a party of skinners! He sits there on his horse, debating with himself which road he shall take—North Castle or Tarrytown—to the left or to the right? It is scarce a matter of life and death after all, he is almost among friends, the worst danger is past.

Which road will you take, John Anderson? There is a great deal more than life or death hangs on your choice!

His choice is made. He will take the Tarrytown road.

CHAPTER XL.

HOW JOHN PAULDING MISSED THE PIGEON BUT HIT THE CROW.

MR. JOHN ANDERSON drew his right-hand bridle-rein, and turned his horse's head into the road leading to Tarrytown—as he had had it in his heart to do, ever since Major Boyd gave his well-intentioned warning. The cowboys, at the worst, would only carry him off to New York, and the first Captain of a vidette that saw them would set him free. Even if Major Boyd had told Mr. Anderson what those particular cowboys had done the night before, he would not have been much afraid to meet with them.

While Mr. Anderson was being rowed from the *Vulture* to his rendezvous with Mr. Gustavus in the bushes on the Clove, the cowboys of whom Major Boyd spoke were breaking into Farmer Pelham's stable at Poundridge. The farmer ran out in his nightshirt to save his horses, and was instantly shot down in his own yard, while his wife shrieked for help from the bedroom window. This was a sad story, but it would not have frightened Anderson into taking the other road.

Still less would it have occurred to Mr. Anderson, that poor Pelham's murder was a matter in which he himself had a personal concern. And yet, if there is anything in astrology, and their nativities had been cast, it would have been seen that Farmer Pelham's catastrophe bore very directly indeed on a certain malefic aspect of the Sun, Mercury, the Moon, and Mars, to be found in the horoscope of Mr. John Anderson.

Turn back, John Anderson, take the other road! Farmer Pelham was murdered the night before last!

John Anderson did not fancy he heard a voice say these words in his ear; but when he had ridden near on four leagues, he had a fright. Riding round a sharp turn of the road, came a horseman whom he immediately recognised as a certain rebel Colonel Samuel Webb. For a moment, Mr. John Anderson's hair stands on end under his round beaver-hat, and his heart is in his mouth. Colonel Webb is staring full at him—wondering probably where he has seen that face before. But Mr. Anderson is shabby and dusty, his face is not over clean, and paler than is natural to him, and he has a beard of three days' growth,

instead of his usually smooth chin. The rebel Colonel rides past, and is soon out of sight.

"That was the nearest thing of all," thinks Anderson. "I thought I was lost then!"

Turn back, John Anderson, turn back—there is yet time!

This was the Neutral Ground—a debateable land wherein Whig and Tory farmers dwelt together in more or less open enmity, and cowboys and skimmers ravaged on either side. When the news spread of Farmer Pelham's murder, seven young men immediately banded themselves together at North Salem, resolved to avenge him, and, if possible, recover the horses for his widow. One of these young men, John Paulding by name, was the son of a respectable farmer, whose own farm had been laid waste by cowboys. John and his brothers, seeing their occupation thus gone, had joined the Provincial army; and John had been captured by young Ensign Tidd, of Delancey's corps, and carried off to the Sugar House. But he had escaped almost directly, and was now hanging about North Salem, courting the Ensign's sister, who was his sweetheart. Most of the seven were farmers' sons.

They had got a permit from Colonel Sheldon at South Salem, and had marched yesterday nearly five-and-twenty miles, slept under a haystack near the church at Pleasantville, and set off again early in the morning on the road to Tarrytown. They got some breakfast at the house of a relation of one of them, and then took up their watch. Four of them went up Butter-milk Hill, whence they could watch the cross-roads, in case the cowboys with their booty should take the other road through the Sawmill Valley; while the other three, one of whom was John Paulding himself, went a few hundred yards beyond, and waited by the side of the main road, about half-a-mile above Tarrytown.

Mr. John Anderson was still hugging himself on his hair-breadth escape from recognition by Colonel Webb, and looking at the sketch of the route given him by Mr. Gustavus, from which route he had departed for such excellent reasons. He was so deep in thought that he did not notice three young men—looking like Continental Militia, playing cards under a tree—and they were so deep in their game, that they did not hear Mr. Anderson's horse-hoofs on the wide bit of grass-land which bordered the road, until he was nearly upon them.

"Stop! who goes there?" cries the tallest of the young

men—a great fellow, over six feet high—snatching up his rifle, and presenting it at Mr. John Anderson.

"I hope, gentlemen, you belong to our party," says Mr. Anderson, taking these for the cowboys.

"What party's that?" asks John Paulding, still pointing his rifle at Mr. Anderson—to which that gentleman replies by asking, "Why, where do you come from?"

"We come from below," says Paulding.

At this Mr. Anderson's brow clears, and he exclaims joyfully—"If you're from below, so am I! I am a British officer, out on particular business, and I hope you won't detain me a moment."

To convince them that he really is a British officer, Mr. Anderson hereupon pulls out his watch and shows it them. Paulding looks at it—at Mr. Anderson—and then at his two companions.

"You must dismount," he says. The other two have got hold of the bridle, and now lead the horse on to the grass.

"By G——! a man must make use of any shift to get along," says Mr. Anderson, dismounting with an uneasy laugh. "I'm happy, gentlemen, to find I am mistaken," he continues, fumbling in his pocket as soon as he is on his feet. "I see you belong to the party from above. You were best not detain me, or you'll bring yourselves into trouble. To convince you of it, there's a pass from General Arnold; I'm in his service. You'll see by that pass, that if you stop me you'll detain the General's business. I'm bound to Dobbs' Ferry to see a person there now, on the General's business, and I do hope, gentlemen, you won't do what you'll be very sorry for afterwards."

As Mr. Anderson says all this in a slightly flurried manner, he takes out a small piece of paper, and hands it to Paulding.

"Look here, Ike," says Paulding, in a low voice to one of the others.

"It aint no good to me, I can't read," says Ike—getting a tighter grip of the bridle as he speaks. Nor can his companion read, so Paulding reads aloud—

"Head Quarters, Robinson House,

"Sept. 22, 1780.

"Permit Mr. J. Anderson to pass the Guards to the White Plains or below, if He chuses. He being on Public Business by my Direction.

"B. ARNOLD, M.-Genl."

"That sounds all right," says Ike, and Mr. Anderson, quick

as thought, remounts his horse, while Paulding gives him back his pass. Mr. Anderson is just in the very act of reining his horse into the road again, when Paulding suddenly says in a low voice to the others,—“D——n him, I don’t like his looks! Don’t let him go, Ike! Stop, sir! we aint done with you yet. There’s a many bad people about on these roads, and how do we know as you aint one of ’em? You’ve a’ready give two different accounts of yourself. Are you got any letters or papers about you?”

“No, none,” says Mr. Anderson, changing colour a little.

“What was that paper as you had in your hand as you was a-coming along?”

“Only a sketch of my route,” says Mr. Anderson, eagerly producing it. “I beg, gentlemen, you’ll not detain me longer!”

“We can’t let you go till we’ve searched you; you said, you know, you was a British officer,” returns Paulding; and in spite of Mr. Anderson’s remonstrances, they lead his horse into a field, partly overgrown with underwood. Here (while the unconscious beast strays off to graze), Mr. John Anderson is compelled to strip, under a great white-wood tree, and is discovered to have upon him a couple of watches—one gold and one silver, seven guineas, and a little Continental money.

Mr. Anderson submits to this indignity with as good a grace as he can—assuring his captors the while that they are incurring a great responsibility in detaining him—until he is desired to pull off his boots. Then he changes colour—but an unarmed man must needs obey three loaded rifles, so he pulls them off. “There’s nothing in ’em,” says one of the men, taking them up and shaking them.

“Feel of his stockings,” says Paulding.

At this, Mr. Anderson becomes as white as his own shirt, and mutters what sounds like, “All’s gone!”

“There’s papers inside his stockings,” says Paulding’s lieutenant, on his knees at Mr. Anderson’s feet.

“Give ’em over to me,” says Paulding, handing his rifle to the third man, and, looking at the backs of the papers, he exclaims,—“This is a spy!”

Then they examine Mr. Anderson more strictly still—even untying his queue. But there is nothing else, and they make him dress himself again—he protesting all the while that they know not what they are doing, and offering them any sum they like to name for delivering him at King’s Bridge.

"Would you give us your horse and saddle, them two watches, and a hundred guineas, to let you go?" asks one of them, winking at Paulding.

"Yes—or any sum you like to name—or any quantity of dry goods," says Mr. Anderson eagerly.

"If we was to go to King's Bridge, they'd nab us, and send us to the Sugar House," replies the other. At which Mr. Anderson offers to let two of them stay with him, while the third goes with a letter he will write. If they will trust his honour, no harm shall befall them. Five hundred, or even a thousand guineas——

The three consult together, keeping, however, their guns handy.

"If you write," says the man who has seemed most inclined to drive a bargain, "they'll send out a party, and nab us all."

"I will pledge you my honour, gentlemen!" cries Mr. Anderson very earnestly. "Sure a thousand guineas——"

"Not if you was to offer us ten thousand!" says Paulding. "I'll lay my life as you're a spy, and we mean to take you to our lines."

Having caught the horse (and ripped up the saddle to see if any more money or papers are concealed there), they order Mr. Anderson to mount, and he is brought out into the road again. Here he sees four other young men, to whom Paulding says something so low that Anderson does not catch it. Whatever it is, it causes all four to start, and stare at him with all their might.

It is vain to strive with fate; Mr. John Anderson went to North Castle after all—where his captors handed him, his papers, his watches, and his money, over to Colonel Jamieson, and themselves went back to look for the murderers of Farmer Pelham.

CHAPTER XLI.

AN ADVANTAGE TAKEN IN WAR.

COLONEL JAMIESON was somewhat perplexed as to what to do with his prisoner, who stoutly maintained his innocence, and most earnestly begged the Colonel to send word of his capture

to General Arnold, who would, he protested, instantly clear him. The papers found upon him were very compromising, being full descriptions of the force and stores at West Point, and also of the works themselves. They were evidently so very important, that Colonel Jamieson finally resolved to despatch them to the Commander-in-Chief, and to send Mr. Anderson himself back at once under an escort to General Arnold. Meanwhile Lieutenant King was ordered to watch the prisoner.

Lieutenant King was a good-natured young fellow. When, after breakfast, the barber waited on him, he advised Anderson to let himself be made comfortable too. It did not escape King, that when the barber untied the ribbon of Mr. Anderson's queue, it was full of hair powder. Mr. Anderson, then, wore powder, and was therefore a gentleman. Lieutenant King began to watch him more carefully.

When the barber had shaved and dressed Mr. Anderson, he asked Mr. King if he could go to bed, while his shirt and small-clothes were being washed, but King good-naturedly lent him some of his own.

But still that Saturday was a very weary day for Mr. Anderson, and he was overjoyed when, late in the evening, another young officer made his appearance, and informed him that he was to come with him to West Point at once.

Mr. Anderson's arms were bound behind him, a soldier held the strap, and the officer (whose name was Solomon Allen), ordered the escort, in the prisoner's hearing, to shoot him if he tried to escape. The escort was composed of nine troopers of Colonel Sheldon's Light horse, but only the officer was mounted. He rode just behind Mr. Anderson, and was good enough to inform him he should be well treated, and, when he was tired, should take a turn on the horse.

Mr. Anderson—who, next to getting to New York, would have preferred being returned to Mr. Gustavus—stepped out briskly, reflecting on what a fortunate idea that was of Colonel Jamieson's, to save time by sending the prisoner himself at once to West Point, instead of merely notifying his capture. They had gone somewhere about seven miles, when they heard horse-hoofs behind them, and an express came galloping up with a letter for the officer in command of the party.

"We are to leave the river-road—as the enemy may have parties about—and take you back again by the other way," says King, when he has read this letter by the light of a lantern.

"There's no fear of a rescue, sir," says poor Mr. Anderson, who sees his last chance disappearing.

The officer is young, and discipline is lax. The guard grumble—they want to get back to West Point, North Castle being very dull.

But after a moment's hesitation, Allen says decisively,—
"We must obey orders!"

And so by a circuitous route—Colonel Jamieson evidently having fears of a rescue—they get back to North Castle very early next morning; and Allen, with a guard, starts off immediately for West Point, with the letter which is to inform General Arnold that Mr. John Anderson has been taken near Tarrytown, with important papers concealed on his person.

Mr. Anderson had to thank Major Tallmadge for thus bringing him back into the jaws of danger. Tallmadge was in command of Sheldon's advanced guard, and had been out all Saturday with a detachment, reconnoitring below White Plains. He returned to quarters late in the evening, and found everybody talking about the spy who had been taken that morning. Colonel Jamieson showed him the papers, which were just going to His Excellency, and which were in General Arnold's own handwriting; and Tallmadge instantly took the alarm, and declared there was more here than met the eye. He all but forced his superior officer to send for the prisoner back, and tried hard to prevent the letter going to General Arnold. Tallmadge was a student of Yale, while Dr. Benedict Arnold was still selling drugs in Water Street, and he had a prejudice against him. He threw his Colonel into a state of great agitation, by daring to suggest doubts of the General, but he went on reasoning, and imploring, and insisting, till Jamieson unwillingly yielded so far as to send for Mr. Anderson back again.

Major Tallmadge did not do things by halves. He proposed a plan to Colonel Jamieson, by which he thought he could discover the plot (if there was one); but the Colonel thought it too perilous.

His plan being rejected (we do not know it—he kept the secret—perhaps for future use), Tallmadge's next care was the safe-custody of the prisoner. North Castle was too near the enemy's lines; so betimes on Sunday morning he took Anderson to South Salem—Colonel Sheldon's headquarters—and kept watch upon him himself.

They spent the morning in Mr. Bronson's bedroom—a small room on the ground-floor. A sentinel stood at the door, and another at the window; Anderson could see him pacing up and down, just outside, his rifle-barrel gleaming in the sunshine of the fine September Sunday morning. Mr. Anderson was absent and distraught—he started a dozen subjects and dropped them all, and could not conceal his intense anxiety. Towards the middle of the morning, he observed that there was a large yard in front of the house (the headquarters of Sheldon's Light Dragoons were at Squire Gilbert's), and asked to be permitted to stretch his legs there. Major Tallmadge disposed the guard so as to prevent any attempt at escape, and Mr. Anderson walked up and down for an hour or so, with Tallmadge and Lieutenant King—who had come over from North Castle.

As they pace the yard, Mr. Anderson tells his companions that he had come with a flag up the Hudson, to see a person on business—that the wind blew so hard, the Dutchmen were afraid to return with the skiff, so, not caring to be detained, he had resolved to return by land.

As Mr. Anderson walks, talking thus, Major Tallmadge watches him narrowly—falling back a little, on pretence of speaking to a sentinel, to see him better.

"Come here, King," he says, "Mr. Anderson will excuse you an instant." Then he whispers in King's ear, "Notice his walk."

King does so very attentively, and then gives Tallmadge a look of intelligence.

"He's no merchant," whispers Tallmadge, just as Mr. Anderson turns. "He has been bred to arms!"

"I've had my own suspicions too," says King, watching the elastic but measured stride of Mr. Anderson.

Major Tallmadge leaves them for a while, and King returns to the prisoner's side, very thoughtful. Suddenly, Anderson exclaims,—“I can bear it no longer! I must make a confidant of some one, and you, sir, have seemed to befriend a person in distress. Sir, I am not what I appear to be! I am an officer of the British army, betrayed by a combination of unfortunate circumstances into the vile condition of an enemy within your posts—'twas without my knowledge and against my express stipulation that I came there! I came in my regimentals—would to God I'd never quitted them! But what could I do?

I go, as I believe and am assured, to neutral ground—I find myself unawares within your lines—I'm told I can't return the way I came—nor any way, unless I will consent to change my clothes! Good God! Mr. King, consider my dilemma, and ask yourself what I could do in it?"

"I suppose, sir," says King very gravely, when Mr. Anderson thus passionately appeals to him,—“I suppose, sir, I must not ask you your errand?"

"'Twas—I frankly confess it—one of those advantages taken habitually in war," returns Mr. Anderson. "A person was to give me information—when does a week pass that you do not yourselves receive information in a private manner?"

Major Tallmadge becomes more thoughtful and uneasy than ever, when he is told this. He is a young man, of about the same age as Mr. Anderson, and, in spite of the dreadful circumstances under which they are thrown together, they have taken a great fancy to each other. Even in this terrible predicament, there is something so spontaneous and single-hearted about Mr. Anderson—and so totally unlike the odious character of a spy—that Tallmadge cannot help being very sorry for him, and shows it.

After dinner, Mr. Anderson becomes still more restless and uneasy; and at length requests Major Tallmadge to procure him pen, ink, and paper, as he wishes to write to General Washington.

Mr. Anderson was a long while writing his letter, and was dreadfully agitated in the course of it. When he had finished it, he read it over carefully, sighing heavily once or twice as he did so.

"You may as well read it," he says, throwing it across the table to Tallmadge, and burying his face in his hands.

Tallmadge takes up the letter. It begins:—

"SIR—What I have said as yet concerning myself, was in the justifiable attempt to be extricated; I am too little accustomed to duplicity to have succeeded."

"A most unspy-like beginning," thinks Tallmadge, glancing pityingly at Mr. Anderson's bowed head.

He reads a little farther, and utters a smothered exclamation—at which Mr. Anderson's head sinks lower still, till it rests upon the table.

The passage which Major Tallmadge has just read runs thus :—

“The person in your possession is Major John André, Adjutant-General to the British army.”

Colonel Jamieson’s messenger, having missed His Excellency on the lower road, happened to pass through Salem just as this letter was ready, and took it with him, along with the papers and plans.

CHAPTER XLII.

HIS EXCELLENCY IS EXPECTED TO BREAKFAST.

AFTER the General had ridden off to Haverstraw, on Thursday afternoon, Mrs. Arnold invited Major Branhholm into her own sitting-room, where he found Major Franks patiently rocking the cradle, with a deal of humorous satisfaction expressed on his honest countenance.

Peggy, as a young mother, was more charming than ever. She could not talk enough of Philadelphia, from which she had hardly ever been away before. She doubted, she said, that she would find West Point very dull after Philadelphia—though, to be sure, she would have been miserable there without the General.

In the midst of such talk as this, who should be announced but Mrs. Smith, come over from Fishkil, to call on Mrs. Arnold.

“I’m sure I’d no idea yesterday morning as I should sleep at Fishkil last night,” observed Mrs. Smith, when she had almost done admiring the baby. “But Joshua came in soon after you was gone, and said I must get ready that minute. Things was quiet enough just then, but no one could tell how long they might remain so, and I had best go while I could. But I said I’d only go on condition I might come down and see you all the same. You must feel dreadfully lost here with only gentlemen about—though the General’s aides seem very agreeable young men, I will say that for them. But, Lord, my dear Mrs. Arnold, what use is a man to a baby?”

The young gentlemen whom Mrs. Smith thus annihilated with a word were not present to hear her opinion of them,

having politely left the ladies together. Mrs. Arnold, however, replied that she expected to do well enough. Major Branzholm was quite an old friend—she knew all his family—and Major Franks had taken amazingly to the baby—though 'twas no wonder, for was he not the sweetest cherub ever seen?

"He is indeed a sweet little fellow," says Mrs. Smith, softly touching the dimple in baby's chin. "How proud the General must be of him!"

"Oh, he is indeed!" cries Peggy. "My dear Mrs. Smith, I'm the happiest woman in the world—that is, I should be, if only the General wouldn't take his troubles so much to heart. But you know how infamously he has been served."

General Arnold returned next morning, and, after spending some time with his wife and child, came down to the large room, where he found his secretary and his aides busy correcting the rough drafts of some reports. He talked to them freely about his hopes. The information, he said, was even more important than Smith had led him to expect. Great caution would, however, be needed, and the least indiscretion would spoil everything.

After the General had left them, and gone back to Mrs. Arnold's room, Noel stood in one of the windows, talking to Varrick. The room was long and low, with heavy beams, and an old-fashioned open fireplace without a mantel. The walls were panelled, and the room had only two windows. Noel was saying to Varrick that he was a little uneasy about the great chain, which had been stretched across the Hudson from Constitution Island. One of the links had lately been removed to be repaired, and was not yet replaced.

"There's something in the air," says Noel. "I feel it stirring. We are on the eve of great events. I do not believe we shall be disappointed this time; depend on it, Varrick, His Excellency will bring back good news from Hartford."

Nothing particular happened that day, or the next. On the third day, which was Sunday, Mr. Joshua Smith came, looking considerably the worse for his patriotic exertions. He was some time with the General, who was rather more cheerful after the interview, though still in very uneven spirits. Mr. Smith doubtless informed him how he had left Mr. John Anderson safe on the Neutral Ground, riding joyfully away to North Castle and the White Plains—little dreaming that Mr. Anderson had disobeyed the General's advice, and was at that very moment

stretching his legs in the yard of Squire Gilbert's house at Old Salem, with Major Tallmadge suspiciously watching him !

No one has ever yet explained why the last few hours before a catastrophe always stand out so clear in the memory. Noel Branzholm was, it is true, expecting some great event, but he did not expect it immediately. Wednesday was the day when His Excellency would probably return, and even after that, several days more must elapse before things could be ready. And yet it ever after seemed to Noel (as it has to most of us before our own catastrophes) as though that Sunday stood out from all his life. There had been absolutely nothing to mark it—for Mr. Smith's visits were so frequent that they had ceased to be observed. The day was very fine—the sun never after seemed to Noel to shine quite so bright as on that day. There was an autumn-glory on the hills too, and the sky took on an ineffable softness. So, at least, it ever appeared to Noel, when he looked back on it. Just as a lowering cloud lends an unearthly glory to the sunset, so did the impending calamity, under whose shadow he ever after saw that day, seem to show the landscape steeped in more vivid and gorgeous radiance than he could ever find there again.

Even the next morning did not seem so fair in memory's eyes, though it was a bright day enough ; and before the sun had dried the heavy autumn-dews, His Excellency's servants arrived with his baggage and announced that he would be at West Point by breakfast-time.

His Excellency would have been there the day before, and had actually left Fishkil, when he met the Chevalier de la Luzerne—the new French Minister—on his way to visit Rochambeau, and was prevailed upon to turn back and pass the night at Fishkil with the Chevalier—who did not know that he was by this delay contriving for His Excellency to reach West Point in the very nick of time !

Long before his baggage had arrived, His Excellency was in the saddle, with General Knox, the Marquess, and their suites—all but Colonel Fleming, who stayed behind at the last moment to make a translation of a letter for the Chevalier. He had not yet overtaken them, when they had nearly reached General Arnold's headquarters.

"General, you are going in a wrong direction," says the Marquess—to whom His Excellency allows the familiarity of a

son. "You know that Mrs. Arnold waits breakfast for us—that road takes us out of our way."

"Ah, I know you young men are all in love with Mrs. Arnold," returns His Excellency good-humouredly. "But I must examine the redoubt this side the river, now we're here."

His Excellency, however, desires Dr. M'Henry and Major Shaw to ride on to the house, and beg Mrs. Arnold not to wait for him—he will be there in an hour.

On His Excellency's aides delivering this message, every one sat down to breakfast—which was laid in that long, low room with the two windows. General Arnold seemed rather absent, while Dr. M'Henry was telling him about the Chevalier. His aides, at the farther end of the table, observed to each other in a low voice that he was always put out, when the French were being talked of.

It was about ten o'clock, and breakfast was half over, when a message was brought in that Lieutenant Allen was come with a letter from Colonel Jamieson.

"Show him in," says the General; and Allen comes in and presents the letter—explaining that he would have been here before, but his guard being on foot, he could not ride fast.

"Sit down, sir," says Arnold, slightly introducing the Lieutenant to Mrs. Arnold and the company. Then he opens the letter, and at the first glance rises hastily from his chair, saying that he is wanted over at West Point immediately.

"Tell General Washington I'm called over the river and will soon return," he says to M'Henry as he goes out, and they hear him ordering his horse to be saddled instantly.

As Mrs. Arnold was present, of course no remark could be made, and a somewhat awkward silence fell on the party—Peggy herself being rather uneasy as to what it could be which took her husband away, when His Excellency was expected every moment.

In a minute or two a message came that the General desired to see Mrs. Arnold for a moment—upstairs.

As soon as Peggy is gone, tongues begin to wag. There is nothing, of course, in the General's going over to West Point—especially as he has not been there for some days—but his going without waiting to see His Excellency is certainly rather odd. Lieutenant Allen thinks there can be no harm in saying that all he knows is, that a person suspected to be a spy was taken on Saturday near Tarrytown; 'tis just possible there may

be something wrong at West Point, and the General may have thought it better not to lose even an hour.

Just as Allen was offering this vague explanation of the bomb-shell he seemed to have brought with him, they heard a shriek — then a bell ringing violently — then the General's voice exclaiming in an agitated tone that Mrs. Arnold was taken ill—some one must attend to her directly ; and a minute or two after, they heard him gallop away. Noel ran out, and presently saw him dashing down a very steep path—the nearest way to the water.

As Peggy was occasionally subject to hysterical attacks, the General's own family was not so much alarmed as were the strangers. Noel hastened off for Dr. Eustis from the hospital, while Major Franks ran upstairs, whence Mrs. Arnold's maid was screaming for help to hold her mistress. When Noel returned with the doctor, they found poor Peggy at the head of the stairs, struggling like a mad creature with her maid and Franks (to whose assistance Colonel Varrick had come by this time), and raving that they were all leagued together to murder her child. It was a dreadful scene—Peggy with her lovely hair all dishevelled, her dress disordered, and so frantic that it was all they could do to prevent her hurting herself. No one had ever seen her like this before ; and even the General's having gone off in a hurry—having perhaps heard that something was wrong at West Point—could not account for so frightful a seizure.

At last Dr. Eustis managed to get her into her room, and to bed, where she lay worn out, uttering heavy sighs, and every now and then springing up to see that the child was safe in his cradle.

In the very midst of this confusion, His Excellency arrived, and was informed of what had occurred. After a hasty breakfast, he said he would not wait for General Arnold's return, but would go over at once to West Point, where he would, no doubt, find him. Perhaps, he added, Major Branzholm might as well come too, as he could tell them anything they might want to know.

Noel had by this time heard from Major Hamilton what had detained his brother—though Hamilton said he ought to have overtaken them long since. Perhaps it was as much this disappointment as the shock of General Arnold's precipitate departure, which made Noel feel so dull and low-spirited. But

various odd circumstances conspired to perplex him disagreeably. As they were crossing, His Excellency observed to the Marquess that they would presently hear a salute fired. But they had reached the landing, and begun to mount the winding path which led up to the forts, before they either heard or saw any sign of their being expected; and the only sign then was Colonel Lamb—General Arnold's old friend and comrade of Quebec and Ridgefield, and who was the officer in command here—coming strolling down the path as unconcerned as possible.

On seeing His Excellency and the other Generals, the Colonel is all in confusion, and begins a hundred apologies for not firing a salute; but, indeed, he had believed they was not to have the honour of seeing His Excellency before Wednesday, or Tuesday at the earliest.

"Then, sir, is not General Arnold here?" asks His Excellency, looking very much surprised.

"No, sir; nor I haven't heard from him these two days," returns Lamb, looking puzzled too.

His Excellency thinks it very odd. They must have misunderstood General Arnold somehow, but they had better inspect the works, if they are to get back in time for dinner. No doubt the General will soon be heard of.

But the General did not appear, and His Excellency, having inspected the works, was rowed back, and was ascending on the other side, when they saw Major Hamilton (who had remained behind) hurrying down to meet them, with so perturbed a countenance that every one instantly knew something serious had happened.

"There's a messenger come from Colonel Jamieson, sir—he went by the lower road, and so missed you," says Hamilton, breathlessly; and then, taking His Excellency a little aside, adds something the others do not hear, but at which His Excellency's face becomes, if less disordered, as grave as Hamilton's own.

As soon as they came to the house, His Excellency was closeted with Major Hamilton for some little time, while the Marquess and General Knox—standing together in one of the windows of the large room (where dinner was already laid)—looked at each other in anxious silence; and their suites stood about in little groups, now and then exchanging a few words, but mostly listening for they knew not what.

Varrick, Franks, and Noel Branhholm were together, nearest the door.

"Whatever it is," said Noel—unable to endure the suspense longer without speaking—"depend upon it, 'tis the same thing that has took General Arnold away—both messages came from Colonel Jamieson."

"I'm every instant expecting a surprise," says Varrick, who is very pale. "What's the sloop been doing so high up the river all this while, I should like to know? Even now she's only dropped down to Verplanck's. And yet, if there was any idea of such a thing, surely General Arnold would have let 'em know it over at West Point—you say Colonel Lamb had heard nothing, Branhholm?"

"He was perfectly dumbfounded at seeing His Excellency—did not expect him till Wednesday," returns Noel.

At this moment, a door is heard to open—a hasty step crosses the corridor, and Major Hamilton looks in.

"His Excellency begs the Marquess La Fayette and General Knox will do him the favour of stepping this way," he says. Then, but just waiting to open the door for them, and usher them in to His Excellency, he is off down the corridor, and the next moment they hear him calling for his horse. A moment more, and he is riding at a hand-gallop in the direction of North Castle.

CHAPTER XLIII.

TREASON.

STILL nothing was heard of General Arnold, and no one knew what to think or what to say, though most people's fears took the shape of expecting a surprise by the enemy.

After some time, dinner was served, and His Excellency and the Generals came in, His Excellency saying, as he looked round the room,—

"Come, gentlemen, since Mrs. Arnold is unwell, and the General is absent, let us sit down without ceremony."

Dinner was worse than breakfast had been. His Excellency talked a little, but it was evident that he only did so to prevent an awkward silence. It was a relief when the meal was over, and the Generals returned to the other room. Several

other officers had been sent off in different directions, since Major Hamilton's departure; but no one had arrived—not even Jasper.

Some time in the afternoon, Noel went up to ask how Mrs. Arnold was. She had been in hysterics great part of the time, replied her maid, and the least thing set her off again as bad as ever. For her part, she couldn't help but be afraid as something had happened to the General.

Noel was still outside on the landing, wondering what it could all mean, and longing for Jasper, when Major Franks came slowly upstairs, with the same expression of consternation on his face which Noel had already seen on Hamilton's.

"Do you know anything?" cries Noel, springing towards him. "For God's sake, what is it?"

"Hush! she will hear us," whispers Franks. "Come away; I can't tell you here."

"In my room, then," said Noel, almost forcibly pushing Franks in at an open door a little way farther along the corridor. "What is it? Have we had another defeat in the South?"

"Worse than that!" exclaims Franks, bursting into tears. "Dishonour—treason! General Arnold has betrayed us, and is gone off to the enemy!"

Noel would have fallen, had not Franks caught him in his arms. Franks got him into a chair, where he sat staring at him without speaking. Fearing he was going to faint, Franks dragged the chair close to the open window.

"Is it certain?" asked Noel presently, in a voice more like a ghost's than a living man's—there seemed no emotion in it, but it made Franks shiver.

"Too certain—only too certain," falters Franks. "The papers are in his own hand—all the plans of West Point, the number of men, the stores, and His Excellency's plan for the next campaign. The officer that had 'em was taken on Saturday morning at Tarrytown——"

"Stop, stop!" said Noel, in the same hollow voice. Then he looked helplessly round the room, put his hand feebly to his head, and begged Franks to leave him. Franks did so very unwillingly, and went downstairs, and out of the house.

There was so much coming and going, that no one had noticed horse-hoofs clattering up to the door, and Colonel Fleming, who was the new arrival, seeing no one to take his horse, had

led him round to the stable himself. He was just returning, when he came upon Franks as he was turning the corner.

"The Chevalier detained me a most unconscionable time," said Jasper, greeting the Major heartily. He was heated with his ride, and looked altogether in such good spirits that it gave Franks a new pang to think of what he must presently be told.

"My horse too must needs cast a shoe, and I had to walk him some way before I could find a blacksmith," continued Jasper; and then he noticed Franks's face, and asked rather anxiously,—*"Is there anything the matter? you look uneasy——"*

"Matter! Gracious Heavens! How shall I tell you?" cries Franks. *"I'm ashamed to speak the words—but you must hear it soon. General Arnold, sir, has turned traitor, and is gone off to the enemy this morning!"*

As poor Franks said this in a most piteous voice, with the tears in his eyes, Colonel Fleming grew as pale as death, and leaned against the wall of the house—he seemed almost stunned.

"We only knew of it an hour ago—they've caught his go-between—Major André, the Adjutant-General of the British army—that will show you if the plot was a deep one!" continues Franks, wishing he had not told Colonel Fleming so suddenly, and yet not seeing how he could have prepared him.

"Think what 'tis to us of his family!" says Franks, and bursts out crying. *"Such a man as we thought him! But 'tis beyond a doubt—there's all the papers to prove it—and we don't know the worst yet, nor how many there is in it——"*

"How does my brother take the news?" asked Jasper, as soon as he could speak.

"He seems crushed by it—I've just told him—I doubt, too suddenly. But, good God! how could I prepare him to learn that our General's a villain? You should go to him, I think, sir—he's been counting so of your coming. You could perhaps comfort him a little; I left him in a very sad way," said poor Franks, who was himself in sore need of comfort. *"We're all overwhelmed and confounded. But, pray, go to your brother, sir—he asked for you, but would not suffer me to stay with him. I was very loth to leave him, but he made me. Varrick, they say, had a fit when he heard it, and the doctor's with him now. Your brother's upstairs in his own room—the third door on the left—perhaps, sir, if you was to go to him——"*

"I'll go instantly," said Jasper, wringing Franks's hand. "But, good God! what consolation can any of us offer each other for treason?"

Just as Jasper, still faint and giddy with the shock of so sudden and unexpected a blow, had reached the foot of the stairs, His Excellency himself opened a door, and desired him to step in. The Marquess and General Knox were there, and one or two staff-officers.

"I see by your face you've heard the news, Colonel Fleming," says His Excellency, going away to the window. "It has hit us all hard, and we don't know yet how far it may go. Sit down, and look at the papers found on Major André, and judge for yourself."

They lay strewn about the table—among them André's letter, which had come with the rest. As Jasper took them up one by one, and saw what they were, the hideous reality almost overcame him.

"'Tis too terrible!" he exclaimed, pushing the papers away as though they were adders and could sting. He covered his eyes with his hand—for a few moments he hardly knew where he was. He heard the Marquess tell somebody to fetch some water.

"You must excuse me, Marquess," says Jasper, looking up. "But I heard this very suddenly—and it comes home to me all the more, because my own brother has been with General Arnold from the first."

"We are all confounded by it!" cries the Marquess. "Who could have dreamed it? It petrifies us! We know not what to fear!"

"We have as yet not the least reason to suppose that any of General Arnold's staff suspected anything wrong," observes His Excellency, still at the window. "Why should they? I had no more suspicion of Arnold than I had of myself."

Colonel Fleming presently begged His Excellency to excuse him for a short time; he had heard, he said, that his brother was quite overcome by the news, and he would be glad to go to him.

Before Jasper left the Council-room, however, he had learned all that was yet known. General Arnold, it seemed, had galloped down to the dock, where his barge was always kept ready. He had entered the barge, and, with six oarsmen, had put off down the river. His Excellency himself must have

seen him go—he had observed a barge carrying a white flag—just disappearing round the farthest point visible, as he rode up to headquarters, after inspecting the redoubt in the morning. Measures were already being taken to strengthen the army at Tappan, and to provide against a surprise of West Point; and Major André was to be brought up to headquarters under a strong escort that night.

If anything could have added to the painfulness of the situation to Jasper, the fact that Major André was involved in it would have done so. Jasper had seen him but twice, but André was closely connected with that never-to-be-forgotten night when he had discovered that Althea loved him; and as he remembered the wild gaiety of André's manner at the *Mischianza*, and thought of his present position, the contrast lent a darker shade of tragedy to what was already so dark.

It was with a heavy heart indeed that Jasper went to find his brother. The door stood ajar; after listening a moment, he knocked, but there was no answer; and he went in. Noel was still sitting by the window; his head was sunk on his arms—he was so still that a thrill of terror shot through Jasper's heart.

"Noel," he said, laying his hand on his shoulder.

Noel lifted up his haggard face, and looked at Jasper.

"My heart is broke!" he cried, as he rose to his feet. "Oh, dear brother, my heart is broke!" Then he threw his arms round Jasper's neck, and sobbed on his breast.

CHAPTER XLIV.

"REMEMBER NATHAN HALE!"

As I live,

I do begin strangely to love this fellow.

THE DUKE OF MILAN.

MAJOR HAMILTON had been sent down to Verplanck's Point, in order, if possible, to intercept Arnold. But he was several hours too late. Colonel Livingston had seen the barge go by, and declared that he had had his misgivings about it, and had had a mind to stop it. Hamilton had but just arrived, when they saw a flag-boat coming up the river, which proved to

carry letters from Colonel Beverley Robinson and General Arnold (safe on board the *Vulture*) for General Washington. Hamilton did but wait to see the orders sent forward to General Greene (left in command at Tappan), and then hurried back with the letters to headquarters, meeting on his way an express riding post-haste to order Major André to be instantly brought up thither.

General Arnold's letter enclosed one to his wife. His Excellency carried it up himself. Peggy received him with a torrent of tears, and the moment he spoke of her husband fell into a sort of frenzy, and exclaimed, as she had done in the morning, that they meant to kill her child. His Excellency, after attempting to speak some compassionate words, was obliged to leave her to her attendants—who, however, could do very little with her.

After the first paroxysm of grief was over, Noel asked a few questions of his brother—the answers to which often overcame him afresh.

"'Twas his enemies drove him to it, Jasper," he said once. "But for them, he'd never have thought of it."

But Noel seemed to be still in a state of semi-stupefaction, and to be unable yet to realise the full extent of Arnold's crime. When he heard that André had been the agent, he turned very pale, but said nothing. Indeed, he said very little all the rest of the day, beyond a few incoherent words of lamentation. He was evidently suffering physically, as well as mentally, from the shock. He complained of his head, and would have it that the wound he had received at Saratoga had opened again. Even when Dr. Eustis—whom Jasper fetched to him—assured him it was not so, it was plain that he was unconvinced.

"Get him away from here, and don't let him know the prisoner is coming," says Eustis, when they are out of Noel's hearing. "'Tis not unlikely that knock on the head may have increased the excitability of a temperament quite excitable enough by nature. Don't leave him much alone. I don't think he seems disposed to do himself a mischief——"

"Good God!" says Jasper, horrified; "do you mean he's going out of his mind?"

"No—he's only completely unhinged—I wouldn't leave him long," says the doctor. "You see this has come like a thunder-clap on us all. There's Varrick's been clean off his head—he's quieter now, but I mean to sit up with him. 'Tis

bad enough for us all, but a hundred times worse for Arnold's own family—who may fancy, poor devils, they're themselves suspected."

Late at night, Mr. Smith was brought in under escort by an officer of the Marquess's suite, whom His Excellency had sent to apprehend him. He had been taken at Fishkil, and loudly complained of his treatment. Nothing was done that night. Mr. Smith was informed that he would be heard in the morning, and until then was left in ignorance of all that had happened. Long past midnight, His Excellency sat up writing to Congress; and before dawn, the express set off to carry the despatches to Philadelphia.

All this while, Major André had been waiting at Salem—beguiling the time by talking to Tallmadge, and making sketches of his unfortunate journey. There was one of these which represented the travellers, a little after they had left Haverstraw—a dark cloud seemed to be coming down upon them. André showed it to Tallmadge, who could not help exclaiming,—

"Oh, that you had never set out on this errand!"

Monday went by thus—the prisoner and his warders listening in vain for horse-hoofs to clatter up to Squire Gilbert's garden-palings. When the messenger did at last come, it was midnight, and the prisoner was gone to bed—perhaps to dream of gliding back to the *Vulture*, and climbing her side to laugh at Colonel Robinson for having been so timid about the venture. Whatever were his dreams, they were broken by the trampling of horses and the shouting of orders. Presently Tallmadge comes to the door.

"You must rise, if you please, Major André," he says, unlocking it from the outside. "Orders have come for you to be taken to Colonel Robinson's at West Point, and the escort is ready."

So they set out in the night and the rain. This is the fifth night which Major André has spent upon the road—reckoning that one when he and Mr. Gustavus talked in the bushes under the Clove, and the other when he lay for a few uneasy hours at Andreas Miller's. They have not ridden far, when, just by North Salem Meeting-House, they meet another express with orders for them to take the upper road. But there is no fear of a rescue—Sir Henry Clinton will not know till to-morrow morning that the plot has been discovered. Benedict Arnold is

at this very moment going down the Hudson in the *Vulture* to tell him.

* * * * *

It had long been daylight when they reached Robinson's house; the rain had nearly ceased, and the clouds were breaking. Dr. Eustis had advised a sleeping-draught, and Noel had been lying all night in a heavy sleep—even the noise of the arrival did not arouse him. But it awoke Jasper, who had shared his brother's room, and he sprang up to see what had happened. In the uncertainty as to how far the plot had gone, his first thought was of a surprise—and full of this fear the night before, he had merely lain down in his clothes. He had pulled the blind aside, before he remembered that it might only be Major André. In the same instant he saw him—dressed in his shabby travel-worn disguise. As his arms were bound behind him, some of his guards were almost lifting him off his horse. He was very pale, and was altogether a most pitiful figure.

Jasper dropped the blind, and threw himself on his bed, utterly overcome.

"Surely," he thought, "if I feel as much as this, Arnold will kill himself! A man might perhaps become a traitor—but how could he live after it?"

* * * * *

When Noel, still heavy with the powerful narcotic Dr. Eustis had administered to him, at last opened his eyes, it was to see Jasper and the doctor standing by his bedside. "You'll be all right if you keep yourself quiet," says Eustis, feeling his pulse. "Feel stupid, don't you? Never mind—give way to it. If you keep quite quiet, you may go over to West Point with Colonel Fleming this afternoon—the sooner you get away from here the better."

Poor Varrick was still, said the doctor, in a half-distracted state, but just enough master of himself to have sent an earnest entreaty to His Excellency that his own conduct might be investigated by court-martial—a request in which Franks had joined. Colonel Fleming had been ordered to go to West Point in the afternoon, to see that certain precautions were properly carried out, and had obtained permission to take his brother with him. Colonel Livingston had been sent for—in reality to give an account of himself. Mrs. Arnold had elected to go to her father in Philadelphia, and was to start under an escort as soon as possible. And Joshua Smith was at this

moment under examination. This was all the news of the morning, and Jasper kept most of it to himself—and especially took care that Noel should not hear that Major André had arrived.

His Excellency had desired to see Major Branhholm before he left—it was kindly intended, but was almost more than Noel could bear. He did not speak as they crossed to West Point, and Jasper, remembering what Eustis had said, did not try to rouse him.

Late at night, he asked Jasper if he knew what Arnold had written to His Excellency?

"He showed it me," replied Jasper. "It began with saying that all he'd done was done out of love to his country, but the chief part of it was taken up with assurances that Mrs. Arnold was innocent, and entreaties that His Excellency would protect her from the popular fury. And in a postscript, he said that the gentlemen of his family were entirely ignorant of his designs."

Noel was sitting at the supper-table, leaning his head on his hands. Colonel Lamb (at whose quarters they were) had just gone out of the room, and the brothers were alone.

Noel sighed heavily, while Jasper was speaking, then lifted his head as if he would speak—but only let it fall again, with a heavier sigh than before.

Neither of them spoke, until at last Jasper said gently,—

"Remember, Noel, if one has been false, how many have been true!"

"Is Gates true? or Lee? or Reed?" exclaimed Noel wildly. "Did we ever get to the bottom of the Cabal? How do you know who is true, if Arnold could be false? I know you always said he was too ambitious—but how hard 'tis to hit the line between ambition, and that desire for honour which is essential to the doing of great deeds! Would you have a man insensible to the respect of his fellows?"

"So far from that," said Jasper—glad that Noel seemed inclined to talk—"I cannot imagine a man's being able to live after he has justly forfeited it."

"How would you feel if Washington turned traitor?" continued Noel, still more excitedly. "What would you say then? Would you bid me remember how many there was left to be true?"

"Noel, you break my heart" says Jasper, coming round to

where Noel sat, and putting his arm round his neck. "What can I say? At such a pass as this, consolation itself gives a fresh wound. But Washington could never turn traitor, because he has never had one thought for self—nor even for glory. Yet his very enemies have been forced to respect him. There's not one of them that could ever fairly look him in the face, except Conway—and you know what Conway wrote him when he believed he was a dying man."

Noel said nothing; he seemed to have relapsed into the apathy out of which he had roused himself for a moment.

In the course of that evening, Major André and Mr. Smith had been brought over to West Point, closely guarded. A part of Colonel Fleming's duty had been to prepare for their safe custody. Noel was by this time aware that Major André was expected, but he merely remarked that he supposed he should see him at Tappan, where he was to be tried. Colonel Fleming had witnessed André's arrival, but was glad that his duty did not compel him to receive him, and André did not know that his old acquaintance of the Mischianza was so near.

Next day, Jasper saw Major Tallmadge, who was almost constantly with André, and learned from him all the particulars of the capture. As to the plot itself, Tallmadge said that André had told him very little—and nothing at all which he did not know was known already.

Tallmadge had become deeply interested in his unhappy prisoner during these few days—which, few as they were, seemed like a lifetime, and which, after the lapse of fifty years, Tallmadge could not recall without tears.

"When I think what his fate must be, I curse the traitor deeper than ever," he said to Jasper. "Could he but be saved! Hamilton is as sorry for him as I am—he says 'tis a pity but what we could exchange him for Arnold. 'Tis a wild idea, of course—and yet I think, if I was Arnold, I'd sooner come back and swing, than live a traitor, and let another man die a shameful death for my treason!"

Early next morning, Tallmadge took his two prisoners (who were not allowed to speak to each other) down to King's Ferry in a barge.

As they pass under the rocky heights of West Point and see the fortress crowning the cliff, Tallmadge cannot help

asking Major André whether he was to have taken an active part in the assault?

At this question, André's eyes light up, and his cheeks glow. He forgets that he is a prisoner going to be tried for his life—he forgets that he is talking to his enemy, as he points Tallmadge to a table of land on the west shore.

"I was to have landed there with a select corps," he says; "and then climbed yonder height behind Fort Putnam—it overlooks your parade at West Point. We must have succeeded, and the key of the country would have been in our hands!"

As he speaks, he seems as though he were entering the fort sword in hand; Tallmadge takes fire himself, and almost forgets what he is listening to. They have agreed on what they call "a cartel"—they may ask each other any question they choose, so long as they do not bring in a third person's name. Here André is firm—he will not even say anything about General Arnold.

"And what reward was you to have had?" asks Tallmadge, when he is again cool enough to reflect that the exploit which he has been hearing described is the storming of West Point by the British.

"The glory—and to serve my King—would have satisfied me," says André. "But Sir Henry hinted that if we succeeded (and we could not have failed), I was to be made a Brigadier."

"You could not have failed indeed," says Tallmadge, as he thinks on what a precipice they have been standing. "You know the ground a vast deal better than I do myself."

So the barge slides down between the solemn defiles of the Highlands. Though they should fall, they could not cover Arnold's shame.

They pass near Belmont, and dine at the Clove—not so very far from the place where Mr. Gustavus gave Mr. Anderson that midnight meeting in the bushes. Will the grass ever grow there any more?

Major André was so much distressed at the thought of having to ride into camp in Mr. Smith's clothes, that Tallmadge sent for his own dragoon's cloak, and, wrapped in this, he rode on to Tappan.

As they ride, the prisoner asks Tallmadge a question, which has been hovering on his lips all day, and intruding into all his protestations that he cannot be considered a spy.

"What do you suppose will be my fate?" he asks, trying hard to speak unconcernedly.

Tallmadge does not reply. André looks at him, but he has turned his face away.

"What will they do with me, do you think?" he says again—his voice a little changed, strive as he will to keep it indifferent.

"I had a dear friend—he was my classmate at Yale," says Tallmadge—his own voice much more constrained and unsteady than the prisoner's. "He went in disguise into your lines at New York, to get us information, just after our defeat on Long Island. His name was Nathan Hale——"

"He was hanged," says André in a strange, dull tone, as Tallmadge pauses. "But he was a spy——"

CHAPTER XLV.

THE RETURN OF THE *VULTURE*.

The attempt and not the deed confounds us.

EVERY one in New York had known for weeks past that some great enterprise was in the wind—some enterprise involved in even more than the usual mystery attending military operations. Sir George Rodney had ordered the transports to be ready to sail at a moment's notice; and an idea had got about that they were to go up the Hudson River. Major Digby viewed these preparations with great satisfaction, and hoped that a certain project had been abandoned, and that we were going to beat the enemy by force, instead of taking him by guile.

He met André one afternoon, and said as much to him. André was with Sir Henry Clinton, and they had both ridden over to the General's country-seat—a charming place overlooking the Hudson, which he had lent to Baron von Riedesel and his family. The Baron had lately been dangerously ill of a fever, but was now better. André was full of praises of the Baroness, who had nursed her whole household, and got them all safe through the fever. Digby said he was on the way thither himself.

"Well, good-bye, Fred: God bless you!" says André—pressing his friend's hand with more effusion than the occasion

apparently demands—and, setting spurs to his horse, he gallops after Sir Henry. The fact was, that Major André's mind being full at the moment of some very important business he was to transact next day, he had quite forgotten that he was to meet Fred that afternoon at dinner, at Colonel Williams's quarters in Kipp's House.

André was in excellent spirits at dinner. Once or twice, he fell into a reverie ; but for the most part he was the life of the company. When his song was called for, he gave them James Wolfe's famous words—

“Why, soldiers, why,
Should we be melancholy, boys,
Whose business 'tis to die?”

Feeling time hang very heavy on his hands, Major Digby called next evening at his friend's lodgings, and, learning he was out, sauntered for some time on the Mall, and looked at the ruins of Trinity Church—burned down in the great fire just after the battle of Long Island, now four years ago. This reminiscence led Major Digby to marvel anew at the astonishingly barren result of so many victories.

“However, I suppose, by what Jack says, we've got 'em at last,” he reflected, as he picked up a stone, and amused himself by aiming at a projection in the ruined wall—wondering as he did so whether Ally had received his letter, telling her she had better do as she chose—he would not advise her, but he thought it must be hard on Fleming—and if she was really determined to marry nobody else, he couldn't see the use of her waiting any longer.

This judicious epistle (which concluded with a somewhat rambling message for Mary) had been despatched about three weeks back, and Fred had been conscious of a generous glow, a little to the left of the second button of his waistcoat, ever since he had sent it off.

This was last Wednesday. It was now Monday evening, and Major André had been denied to him every time that he had called at his lodgings. There was but one interpretation of this absence—Jack had undertaken that business after all. Fred's heart misgave him. He did not sleep as well as usual that night—a most undoubted proof of the affection he bore to André. He awoke several times, with a sense of something disagreeable having happened or being about to happen, and

each time remembered the next instant that Jack André was gone—most likely to Philadelphia—to see a scoundrel who, if anything went wrong, would pretty certainly betray poor Jack to save himself. He rose earlier next morning than his duty for the day demanded, and strolled to the wharf, at which vessels coming down the Hudson were usually looked for.

Early as it was, there were a few other people waiting about. Fred saw one of Sir Henry's aides and spoke to him. He would have asked him boldly if he knew where Major André was gone, but for the fear lest the question might be considered a mark of indiscretion, should the aide happen to know anything about the offer which had been made to himself.

They were still upon the wharf, when a sloop came in sight, and Sir Henry's aide exclaimed that that was the *Vulture*. As she approached, Fred saw Colonel Beverley Robinson standing on the deck. As soon as the sloop came alongside, Robinson saw him, and, calling to him, desired him to oblige him by finding a coach as quick as possible. Fred ran off to the nearest inn, but had to wait while the horses were put-to. When he came back, a stout-built dark man in a Provincial uniform had disembarked, and was talking with Robinson and Sir Henry's aide. They all looked very serious, and, as they got into the coach, Robinson bade the coachman drive to Turtle Bay as fast as he could.

Fred had of course no idea who the American officer was, when he was helping put him and Colonel Robinson into the coach; but long before evening, he and all the other British officers in the city knew that it was the famous General Arnold, that he had come over to the King's side, and that Major André had fallen into the hands of the rebels. Sir Henry, it was said, had instantly written a most urgent letter to General Washington, insisting that Major André was protected by General Arnold's pass, and requesting his immediate return.

But although Sir Henry took this high ground, every one knew that poor André was in the terrible position of having been caught in disguise within an enemy's lines. So little was yet known that very little could be done. Colonel Simcoe had, it was reported, immediately offered to march with the Queen's Rangers and rescue André. It was imagined that he would be taken to Philadelphia, and a watch was kept upon the roads. As for Major Digby, he thought that Sir Henry should instantly send Admiral Rodney up the river as far as he could

go, and himself march by way of Tappan, and boldly attack Washington in his camp.

"They'd hang him as soon as they heard we was approaching," says Wickham, in answer to this proposition.

"They dursn't do it!" cries Fred in a transport of grief and fury. "Are we going to wait here, while Jack André's hanged? 'Tis monstrous! 'Tis incredible! A parcel of rebels hang up our Adjutant-General! This comes of our dangling about, doing nothing but burn a farmhouse every now and then—which only infuriates 'em, and don't do 'em any serious hurt—instead of going out and meeting 'em fairly in the field—where we've always beat 'em, except at Saratoga."

Here Fred's anger turned to a deep melancholy, and he added very despondingly,— "I'm afraid, Wickham, that Sir Henry's an unlucky General to get one out of a scrape. Perhaps it warn't altogether his fault with poor General Burgoyne; but I can't help fancying as he's a poor hand at a rescue. Why don't he run-a-muck for once? 'Twill be to his eternal disgrace if he lets Jack André be hanged!"

Fred's grief for his friend here overcoming his indignation at Sir Henry's supineness, he shed tears, and exclaimed that 'twas all his own fault, and he should never be able to forgive himself—on which Wickham, who was very fond of him, dropped a hint to the regimental surgeon that Major Digby had been talking rather wild, and that he thought he should be looked after a little, lest he might do himself a mischief.

Fred was perhaps scarcely just to Sir Henry—who had most strictly charged Major André not to go within the American lines, or to change his clothes, or carry any papers. The first injunction he had disobeyed unwittingly, and there then remained no alternative but to disobey the second. But the most fatal mistake of all was the carrying the papers.

The existence of the Devil has been disproved several times (once would have been enough); but the story of a great temptation and fall can hardly be told even yet without some reference to him—at least as a figure of speech.

Ancient magicians used (for a sufficient consideration) to conjure up in the depths of their mirrors pictures of the future destinies of those who consulted them. Such pictures—but lying ones—does the Devil show from that high mountain to which sooner or later he takes every one of us. He unfolded to

Benedict Arnold, smarting under his wrongs, a whole panorama, wherein the New Marlborough saw himself bringing the rebellion to a sudden conclusion, playing the part of reconciler and intercessor, redresser of grievances, and establisher of a Constitution which everybody should shortly own was infinitely better than the impracticable dream of Independence. His countrymen would of course be incensed at first—when did a land know her deliverers? but as time went on, he would be seen to have been their far-sighted benefactor—who had got them the substance at the price of a mere empty name. Instead of a many-headed Republic, held together by the loosest of ties, he would have been the means of founding the greatest and most prosperous Vice-royalty in the world—a New Great Britain. And in the Upper House of its Legislature the name of the New Marlborough should, in days to come, be honoured as his who had put an end to a hopeless contest, stopped the effusion of blood, and erected thirteen exhausted and starving colonies into one flourishing Dominion. “All’s well that ends well”—and future generations, seeing what unspeakable benefits they had derived from his treason, would bless the traitor.

This was the picture which the Devil had shown Benedict Arnold—so often, that he knew every detail of it, and saw himself passing from brief obloquy to lasting honour—until his dealings with Mr. John Anderson should be no more remembered than are the dealings of John Churchill with the agents of King James.

There was another picture, however, which the Devil never let him see. It would have shown Benedict Arnold, alone and unattended, landing from the *Vulture*, and going up to the Beekman House, to tell Sir Henry Clinton that the plot had failed, and that his favourite officer was a prisoner in the hands of the enemy. In this other picture he would have seen himself despised by those who had hoped to profit by his treason—detested as the cause of André’s destruction—and distrusted by his new allies, who, it seemed, could not believe themselves in the genuineness of the treachery they had fostered.

The Devil played this same trick on all the actors in this business. He showed John André the storming of West Point, and the epaulette of a Brigadier—and Sir Henry Clinton, the submission of the rebels, and a coronet; and he contrived for the rays of his magic-lantern to gleam so dazzlingly on these, that neither Sir Henry nor André observed the gibbet in the

background. Lastly, with a refinement of diabolical malice, by way of compensation, he made Sir Henry a present of General Arnold.

A nice weighing of distinctions had never been Fred Digby's *forte*—he openly expressed his detestation for the traitor, swore he would never go anywhere where he was to be, and, having on one occasion met him on Broadway, deliberately turned on his heel in so marked a manner, that all the passers-by perceived his meaning.

Fred expected to be sent for to headquarters for this, but General Arnold perhaps did not care to mention it; at any rate, Fred never heard anything about it.

Nothing could persuade Fred that General Arnold was not to blame for André's capture. Had he not contrived his own escape? he asked. And if he had been able to do that, as he represented, at a moment's notice, could he not have taken better care of poor Jack? It was quite in vain, that any cooler-headed person represented that Arnold had had as much at stake as André himself—a premature discovery was ruin to his plan; and although he had, by a hairbreadth escape, saved his neck, the failure of the plot made him simply a deserter from the rebel army, instead of the deliverer of it up to the King. But Fred was deaf to all these reasonings; he doggedly repeated that all he knew was that Arnold was safe in New York, with Sir Henry mighty civil to him—though no doubt in his heart he wished him at the devil—while Jack André was to be hanged as a spy—here Fred burst into tears, and swore that if Jack wasn't rescued, Sir Henry Clinton would be his murderer.

Long before this, Fred and a great number of the officers in New York had offered their services for a rescue-party. Simcoe was on the watch; and if General Washington had not used the most extraordinary precautions—always keeping his whole army between the prisoner and his friends—a rescue would undoubtedly have been attempted. Meanwhile, letters were passing constantly, and André's servants had been sent to him, with the clothes he had written for, that he might if possible appear at his trial dressed as a British officer.

But Colonel Simcoe's scouts watched the roads to Philadelphia in vain; the prisoner was kept close in Tappan, with a whole army to guard him.

CHAPTER XLVI.

IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT.

THE Board which was to try Major André was assembled in the old Dutch Church—a substantial structure standing on a knoll by the side of the post-road, and shadowed by a clump of trees. Hither—where the Dutch farmers and their wives and children used to come up every Sunday in sturdy procession, to sit in their high-crowned hats, and listen to a sound discourse on Sovereign Grace—John André was brought on Friday morning to be tried as a spy.

A great crowd had collected around the church—which was also surrounded by a strong guard. General Washington was returned to his old headquarters at De Windt's house near Sneed's Landing. He had not seen the prisoner, and, it was said, did not intend to do so. General Greene was the President of the Board; with him sat Lord Stirling, La Fayette and Steuben, Knox, and St. Clair, John Starke of Bennington, and that rebel namesake of Sir Henry Clinton's into whose hands Fred Digby had so nearly fallen after Saratoga.

There were no witnesses; not even Joshua Smith was called. What need was there? The letter which Major André wrote at Salem on Sunday afternoon was enough. His only defence was, that he had come unintentionally within the lines, and that he ought to be held to be protected by General Arnold's pass.

But no one outside knew this as yet. The doors were shut, and the only sounds were the buzz of the multitude without, and the occasional clank of arms.

* * * * *

Noel Branhholm had joined with General Arnold's aides in requesting an investigation, and he was now in camp, at his brother's quarters. He still complained of his head, and was very restless and excited. He had thrown off his gloomy silence, and was asking Jasper a hundred questions about André, when he had seen him in Philadelphia. What he had said? how he had looked? what Jasper had thought of him?

Jasper had already told all this at least a dozen times before—how Captain André had come hurrying in to his lodgings in his masquerade dress, and apologised for keeping him

waiting, and had insisted on carrying him back to see the festival—and added,—“ We spoke only of indifferent matters—any others would of course have been improper ; and next day at the Council he took no part. I thought him an accomplished man of the world—a little of a courtier, perhaps, but as unlike as possible to a conspirator. There was something about him very taking—so much so, that I have shrunk from seeing him in this situation, and shall avoid it, if I can.”

Greatly to Jasper's surprise, Noel said quickly, but as though he himself were noway concerned,—

“ If, as was believed in Philadelphia, he was a suitor to Althea, 'twould be as painful to him as to you.”

“ I wish I had told Tallmadge not to mention my being here,” returned Jasper. “ But you are surely not going out ? ”

“ I must see him ! I'd resolved not to, but I can't get him out of my head ! ” cried Noel, suddenly turning from the window, against which he had been pressing his burning brow, and speaking very excitedly. “ Don't persuade me, Jasper ! I knew he was there when we left Robinson's, and I knew when he came to West Point. Perhaps if I see him he'll cease to haunt me ! ”

Jasper was very uneasy at this and at Noel's whole manner, and spoke about it to his friend, Surgeon Thacher, who was now appointed to a regiment of his own State of Massachusetts.

“ My dear fellow, I know more about broken heads than I do about disturbed minds,” says Thacher. “ But we might let him blood—we did so to that poor fellow I told you of, that put General Gates in such a fix, and it seemed to do him good. 'Tis a pity your brother can't go away, but I suppose he couldn't ask for leave till this investigation has taken place—though, of course, every one knows 'tis a mere matter of form.”

They were still talking, and the surgeon had just said he would not give twopence for André's chances, when a soldier came running in to tell the Colonel that Major Branhholm had fallen down in a fit ; he had seen them bringing Major Andrew back from being tried, and had dropped down in the street. They were bringing him up to quarters.

“ You should have kept him in bed, Fleming ! ” exclaims Thacher, as though this were as easy to do as to say. “ Why did you let him go ? I shall cup him directly ! We shall have him in a brain-fever, before we know where we are ! ”

It is probable that the sight of André did but hasten an inevitable crisis, but its immediate effect was very alarming.

When Noel came out of his swoon, he was so far delirious that, though he knew his brother, he took Thacher for Dr. Eustis, and believed that they were still all at Robinson's house. He constantly besought Jasper to look out of the window, and see if Major André was coming; and the next moment, would call him back to his bedside, and implore him not to leave him. He was never quiet but when he was holding his brother's hand. Thacher had used pretty severe measures, and had strictly enjoined Jasper not to leave the patient for an instant, and to have some one else near, to help in case he should become violent. Telemachus therefore spent the night stretched across the door, in the passage outside—where he presently fell so fast asleep, that he did not even awake when the surgeon, coming early in the morning to see how his patient did, fell over his prostrate body.

But poor Noel was not violent. He lay grasping his brother's hand, occasionally moaning that his heart was broken, but he was not even particularly restless during the first part of the night. In the confusion of a troubled mind, he seemed to cling blindly to Jasper, as the only stable element left in a world which had suddenly given way beneath him.

"Hold me faster, brother!" he would say, as often as Jasper's grasp relaxed; "don't let me go!"

Once or twice, he seemed to be speaking to Althea, but in so low and incoherent a manner that Jasper only caught her name. More often it was his mother or Mary that he appealed to.

"Mother, mother!" he cried once, in a tone of piercing anguish, "all my glory is turned into shame!"

And once he said sharply,—“If he had loved you as much as I do, how could he have kept silence so long? and all for a complete stranger——”

He broke off suddenly, and was quiet for some time, while Jasper waited nervously for what he might say next.

Jasper had looked forward to this vigil with a painful apprehension of what Noel might say. On the night of their reconciliation at Hallibut's, Noel had thrown aside reserve, and spoken so freely that Jasper (who knew by experience how much bitterer are silent griefs than those which can be told) had allowed himself to think that his brother's grief was not incurable. But now, left alone in the dead of night, with Noel half delirious—in that strange state in which the soul, losing the self-consciousness which seldom entirely slumbers even in our

most passionate moments, casts off the last veil of reticence—what secret bitterness might he not discover !

But Jasper wronged him. There was no thought in Noel's heart towards him which he need shrink from reading. If, in the first shock of learning that his brother was his successful rival, some wild and angry feelings had for a time seemed to gain possession of him, it had been more in seeming than in reality ; and those feelings had been born far more of anguish than of hatred. Noel's love for his brother was as deep as his life—as it was as old ; and in his maddest moments he had never even imagined that Jasper had been untrue to him.

As Jasper sat by his brother, and felt the pressure of his hand gradually slacken, amidst thoughts of the miserable tragedy of Arnold's treason, many gentler memories intruded (as stars shine through rifts in a storm) of another night long ago, when he had played the nurse at Oglethorpe to Noel—who had fallen ill while their mother and Colonel Branhholm were gone on a visit to their uncle at Fairmead. Jasper smiled to himself, as he remembered that his treatment had solely consisted in deluging his patient with barley-water, and pulling the bed-clothes over him as often as he threw them off—which was on an average twice every five minutes. He had, however, sent word to his mother, who had started instantly—on horseback, for greater expedition—and had arrived after midnight, to find the juvenile physician at his wits' end, the patient having just awakened so much restored, that he had announced his firm resolution to get up and have some supper. A mist came over Jasper's eyes as this vision passed, and he came back to the present hour. The lamp was shaded, but there was light enough for him to see that Noel's face had grown less tranquil. He moaned and stirred uneasily, and began to talk—at first muttering unintelligibly, but soon speaking in a loud, excited key. His mind was evidently occupied with the march to Quebec.

"If that's the Chaudière, we're saved," he cried. "Arnold can't fail !"

Then he laughed—no doubt at some ludicrous incident of the march ; but his wild laugh gave Jasper more anguish than any ravings could have done. Presently he grew quieter again.

"Take it away," he said, speaking calmly enough, though he pushed Jasper's hand from him as he spoke. "I'll not have it, sergeant—'tis not bear—'tis hell-broth ! Faugh ! Give it some one else !"

From this his thoughts seemed to be wandering farther back still. He talked of things which happened in their childhood—strangely mixing up these childish memories, however, with the events of later years.

"Lay your hand on my head—'tis like a fire there," he moaned, as he tossed restlessly from side to side. "No—not that one—don't let go my hand—lay your other on my head. Why are you so unkind, when you know 'tis the only thing that eases me?"

"Why, Noel, have you forgot Germantown?" said Jasper, infinitely distressed, and not knowing how to appease him.

But sometimes a name will strike on the disordered sense, when connected words have ceased to convey any meaning. At the word "Germantown," Noel suddenly grew quiet, and opened his eyes.

"No, I've not forgot Germantown," he said, looking up at Jasper. "How could I, when I was there last night? 'Tis you forget, Jasper—you walked all the way back with me, though you would not speak, and I thought you was angry. The snow lies on their graves—I shall never forget it, for I saw a falling star—it fell right over Philadelphia. I didn't know what it meant then, but I know now! I know now!"

He burst into wild sobs and tears, exclaiming over and over again, that his heart was broken, and conjuring Jasper not to leave him—to let him feel him close to him.

"The moment you let me go, there's something comes and tells me I'm a traitor," he said, his mood changing to a sort of frenzy. "But I'm not—Jasper, tell me I'm no traitor!"

"God knows, my poor boy, you are none!" said Jasper, unable to restrain his tears. They fell on Noel's face, as he bent over him. Noel put up his hand and touched Jasper's cheek.

"Don't weep for me, dear brother," he said, more reasonably than he had spoken all the night. "Lie down beside me, so as I can feel you're there—I think I could sleep then. I had a bad dream, but 'tis gone."

Noel soon fell asleep, his brother's hand locked fast in his, and his head resting against his shoulder—as they had slept when they were children together at Oglethorpe; but Jasper lay long, listening to his breathing—afraid every moment lest he might awake, and begin it all over again. But he slept on, and Jasper, worn out with grief and watching, at last fell asleep

too, and did not awaken until it was broad day, and Thacher was looking in at the door, his finger on his lip, and nodding to express his satisfaction at seeing his patient still quietly sleeping.

CHAPTER XLVII.

A TRAITOR'S EFFIGY.

Let me sink
Where neither man nor memory may find me.

THE DEVIL'S LAW-CASE.

THE messenger who carried General Washington's despatch to Congress rode so hard, that he reached Philadelphia the same night. By Wednesday, every one had heard the news.

Mary Fleming came to see Althea in the morning of that day, looking so pale that Althea was terrified. She sank down trembling on the sofa, and could not even ask what was the matter?

"Oh, Althea, a terrible thing has happened," said Mary, dropping into a chair, and pulling her calash off her head, as though it suffocated her. "No—they're safe, thank God! Major André has been taken, and is to be tried as a spy; but that's not the worst. He had papers upon him, which showed that General Arnold had agreed to deliver up West Point. General Arnold has escaped to New York, but every one says that Major André will be hanged for a spy!"

"Major André! 'Tis impossible!" cried Althea, flushing crimson. "Where did you hear it? It can't be true!"

"'Tis all over the town," replied Mary quietly. "But Mr. Rittenhouse told me."

"It may be a false report—General Arnold has enemies here," said Althea. Then as the full meaning of the news began to unfold itself to her bewildered mind, she cried, almost wildly, that it could not be true—she would never believe it! Sir Henry Clinton would never have stooped so to dishonour himself in the eyes of the world, as to attempt so unsoldierly an expedient.

"It will break Noel's heart," said Mary, when Althea paused in the midst of these breathless exclamations. Mary spoke in a low quiet voice, with such despair in her eyes that Althea herself was quieted by it.

"If this is true, Mary, the dishonour to us will be greater than to you," she said sadly. "But I cannot believe it yet. And Major André——"

Althea broke off, as a certain conversation—their last—came to her memory. On that occasion, André had proposed that she should sound Colonel Fleming, with a view to detaching him from the Provincial cause.

"Is it true, Mary?" she said again. "We've had so many false malicious reports—surely this is one of them."

"'Tis true; and 'twill break Noel's heart," replied Mary, in the same resigned despairing tone. "His whole heart was set on General Arnold—he was so proud to have followed him. He will never get over his turning traitor. I should not wonder at anything I heard of him—anything, I mean," she added, correcting herself, "except his proving false too."

Althea knelt down by her, and put her arms tenderly round her, but did not speak.

Mrs. Maverick found them thus, half an hour afterwards, when she came in from calling at the Shippens'. She was in great agitation and had evidently been weeping.

"Have you heard this dreadful news?" she began. "The Shippens are completely broken-hearted, thinking what will become of Peggy, but, as I told them, she'd best go at once to her husband—that is, if General Washington will let her. But, oh, poor Major André! They all seem to think he'll be treated as a spy! I can't believe Mr. Washington will really dare to shoot him—but the very thought of such a thing's enough! So amiable and accomplished a young man——"

Mrs. Maverick here cried heartily, repeating every now and then that Mr. Washington would sure never dare do such a thing as shoot an Adjutant-General, and protesting she wondered what Sir Henry was thinking about when he let him go.

"If General Arnold wanted an interview, he ought to have gone to Sir Henry," she said, as her indignation began to get a temporary advantage over her grief. "A pretty thing, indeed, to send a British officer into a trap! And I must say, I think it looks very shabby on General Arnold's part, that he did not take precautions to make such a misfortune impossible! If he saw his error, and wished to repair it, he should have gone over openly, and not have allowed Major André to fall a sacrifice!"

Neither Mary nor Althea cared to comment on this view. Mary soon went away, and Althea was so extremely silent that

Mrs. Maverick asked her several times whether she had heard any bad news beyond this shocking affair?

A good many people called on Mrs. Maverick that day, eager to question a person who had intimately known the unfortunate Major. Althea sat and listened to all that was said, replying when her cousin appealed to her, but taking no voluntary part in the conversation, and looking so melancholy that some of the more sagacious went away convinced that Miss Digby had had a tenderness for Major André, though probably no one would ever know all the rights of it now.

During the next few days, nothing was talked of in Philadelphia but the treason of General Arnold, and the fate of Major André. If President Reed had any disposition to triumph at this proof that Arnold was even blacker than he had painted him, he was in too deep affliction (his wife being but just dead), to indulge such feelings now. But a public demonstration was not wanting. On the Saturday night, just after dark, a procession passed along High Street to Market Hill, escorting a dismal pageant. The effigy of the traitor was sitting in a cart, holding a mask in one hand, and in the other a letter signed—in letters big enough for every one to read—Beelzebub. Arnold was represented with two faces, and behind him stood the devil, pitchfork in hand, and shaking a purse in his ear.

Mrs. Maverick, Althea, and Mary Fleming saw this procession, as it streamed past under the windows, up to Market Hill, where a bonfire had been prepared.

Mrs. Maverick was loud in expressions of concern—in which disapproval of General Arnold's manner of deserting his colours was oddly mixed up with hopes, that now the rebels would see they could not trust their own leaders, and would listen to His Majesty's gracious terms.

Althea stood, half concealed by the window-curtain, looking down on this terrible spectacle, with a face so pale and stern that the good old lady refrained from addressing her, and inwardly reflected that she should never understand her. It was of course a most shocking, dreadful thing—though Major André could not be seriously in danger—but to look at Althea, one would think either that he had been her lover, or else that General Arnold had deserted from our cause instead of coming over to it.

She was still more surprised when, after Mary had gone

home—her father had come round to fetch her, as the streets were so disorderly, and had stayed some time, talking of the latest reports—Althea suddenly threw herself on her knees before her, laid her head in her lap, and burst out crying.

“Good heavens! my dear child, what is it?” said the old lady, much alarmed. What if Althea had been interested in Major André after all? Women did inexplicable things sometimes; was it possible that she had accepted Colonel Fleming out of compassion?

“What is it, dear child?” she asked, caressing her very tenderly. “Sure you can tell me, you know ’twould be sacred.”

“There’s nothing to tell, dear Cousin,” sobbed Althea. “Only the dishonour of it all.”

“Tut, tut! there’s no dishonour except to General Arnold,” said Mrs. Maverick briskly. “I suppose he will always be looked down on as a turncoat, for running off in this way—especially as he has somehow or other left poor Major André to bear the brunt. But they’ll exchange him, of course. Sir Henry seems to me to have mismanaged the business dreadfully; but of course something will be done at once to get Major André released—and I aint sure but the affair may perhaps produce a good effect on the rebels in the end.”

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE ONLY WAY.

NOEL did not fairly awake till past noon. He was very weak, but quite himself. He spoke calmly of Major André, and begged Jasper to go and see what news there was.

As Jasper was leaving his quarters, Tallmadge came up.

“You have heard, I suppose?” he said, so gravely that Jasper read his news in his face.

“You mean he is found to be a spy?” he asked. “I was prepared for it of course——”

“There was no escape—the Board could have come to no other conclusion,” said Tallmadge, interrupting him. “But ’tis shocking to think of such a fate befalling so amiable a young fellow. They say the members of the Board were deeply affected—his very judges wept for him, though they may not spare him. Nature never made him for a spy—he’s too frank

and ingenuous. Every heart bleeds for him. But, shocking as 'tis, I see 'tis inevitable; not to make an example would be to offer impunity to treason."

Tallmadge spoke with the tears in his eyes, and added that he felt it in a peculiar degree, having been the main instrument of his ruin—since had he not prevailed on Colonel Jamieson to send for him back, he would doubtless have made good his escape with Arnold.

"He wants to see you," he continued. "I mentioned the other day that you was here, and he has been asking for you ever since. I was this morning at headquarters, and told His Excellency of his request, and here is the order to admit you."

They were going along towards the village of Tappan.

"He's pretty calm," continued Tallmadge. "Yesterday, on his return from appearing before the Board, he wrote to Sir Henry Clinton, and as he was doing it, he burst into tears, and said that what grieved him most was the fear lest Sir Henry might reproach himself with having allowed him to come into this dreadful position. He let me see what he'd wrote—'twas a most affecting letter—entirely exonerating Clinton from blame."

Major André was confined in an old stone mansion on the main street. When they had nearly reached the door, Jasper begged Major Tallmadge to turn back with him a little way—he did not, he said, feel sufficiently master of himself to go in that moment.

"Perhaps you think, Fleming," says Tallmadge, turning back instantly, and linking his arm in Jasper's, "that I show a heartless composure to be able to talk thus, but I've been with him near a week now, and I suppose one gets a little hardened."

As Tallmadge was all the while on the verge of tears, the hardening process had certainly not gone far with him.

"I trust I should have acted as I did, had I known who 'twas I was fetching back, and what the consequences must be to him," he continued presently. "But I'm glad I did not know; a man is in a terrible strait when his public duty is on one side, and his private feelings on the other. But how I shall go through with it I know not—he has made me promise to be with him to the last, and unless they grant his request as to the mode of his death, I know not how I shall endure to see his end."

Tallmadge then told his friend that Major Hamilton (whose

sympathies, like every one else's, had been warmly excited for the prisoner), had actually proposed to His Excellency to offer to exchange Major André for Arnold! His Excellency, while never for a moment believing such a proposal would be complied with by Sir Henry Clinton, had nevertheless consented to let the bearer of the report of the trial communicate it verbally, in such a manner as that it should be certain to reach Sir Henry.

"How they must loathe Arnold!" said Tallmadge. "'Tis a just retribution, so far as they are concerned, to see themselves compelled to sacrifice André for his sake—for of course Hamilton's idea is wild—indeed, he says himself he knows it is inadmissible, except as an indirect suggestion. 'Twas, I can't help fancying, in reality prompted by an enthusiastic notion on Hamilton's part, that the traitor himself might be struck with remorse, and come back of his own accord."

* * * * *

The old 'Seventy-six stone house was closely guarded. Besides the sentries, two officers were pacing up and down in the entrance hall, with naked swords.

Jasper found Major André—who had just received the necessities he had written for to General Robertson, and was dressed in uniform—sitting at a small table, covered with writing materials. He was sketching at the moment, but two or three unfinished letters lay on the table or the floor. Two officers (by General Washington's express command) sat guarding him with their swords drawn. André threw down his pen, and rose as Jasper entered.

"The last time we met, Colonel Fleming, was in a very different scene," he said, with a sorrowful smile, as he came forward to greet him. "Brief as was our acquaintance, I have ever since hoped we might meet again; but I little thought 'twould be thus."

Jasper, painfully constrained, knew not what reply to make, but said that he trusted Major André was receiving all the attention he required; and begged to know if he could be of use to him in any way.

"Only," says André—with one of those pathetic smiles which had touched the hearts of all his jailers—"Only by coming here to cheer one of the few hours which remain to me. There is, I suppose, no hope that General Washington will listen to Sir Henry's representations? He denies, I hear, the right of General Arnold to grant me a pass under the circumstances,

and that was the only way in which I could have been saved."

"There is one other way," said Jasper, seeing that André waited for him to speak. "The way Major Hamilton proposed,—for I fancy it came from him, though his sense of honour is too delicate for him to have suggested to you to mention it to Sir Henry Clinton. But it is, I know, to be suggested to him indirectly."

"And that——?" asked André, but as though he already guessed the answer.

"Is that General Arnold should be given up to die in your place."

"'Tis impossible!" cried André, flushing scarlet. "As a man of honour, Colonel, you must see 'twould be impossible!"

"Impossible, I grant you, for Sir Henry to deliver him up," returned Jasper. "But not perhaps wholly impossible for Arnold to return—as the one only way remaining to expiate an everlasting infamy."

"He would never do it—men who do what he has done don't immolate themselves," said André sadly.

"He is not quite a common traitor," said Jasper. "'Tis just possible he may find he cannot endure the weight of the universal contempt he will meet with—but 'tis unlikely. As you say, traitors commonly save themselves."

"But at least," said André, nervously making random strokes with the pen he had taken up again,—“at least I trust my request may be complied with, and that the manner of my death may become a soldier's?"

And as Jasper did not reply, André asked him point-blank what he thought would be General Washington's decision? What was said about it?

"I know nothing," replied Jasper, thankful that he could say so. "I have scarce left my brother's room these two days, and have heard nothing."

On this André courteously inquired after Major Branhholm, and was informed that he had taken these unhappy events so much to heart, as to become seriously indisposed.

It was a relief when Major André left these painful topics to speak of the past.

"I believe I should congratulate you, Colonel Fleming," he said, looking at Jasper—who, throughout this most distressing interview could seldom bear to meet those boyish blue eyes,

full of wistful appeal from a shameful doom. "You have, I believe, gained the affections of a lady for whom I have so high a respect, that 'tis with compunction I mention her here."

"She will be deeply concerned to hear of what has happened," said Jasper. "'Tis almost impossible I can express the grief it gives me, without at the same time saying what must wound you. I know 'twill be a great shock to Miss Digby——"

"Her brother might—if he had chose—have come on this errand," says André after a moment. "Sir Henry offered him to go, but he declined; and the chief reason he gave was that if he should chance to meet you, he was sure his looks would betray him. He's an honest fellow." André said this half-absently as he spoke, studying the effect of a sketch he had been making.

"I see you are sorry for me, Colonel," he went on, glancing at Jasper, and striving to repress his emotion. "I've received so much kindness that it makes it harder to maintain the stoicism my position demands. To die on a gibbet, I confess, demands almost more than I am master of."

Jasper could not speak.

"Come, Colonel Fleming," said André, for the moment perfectly collected. "Fred Digby used to tell me you was a philosopher, and a philosopher should remember we must all die sooner or later. I thought you was a greater Stoic than I; and if, while you stood frowning at our frivolities in Philadelphia, some one had told me that you would one day be shedding tears at my fate, I'm certain I wouldn't have believed it."

"God knows I'm no Stoic," said Jasper, "and if you fancied I frowned, 'twas chiefly at some thoughts of my own which were just then greatly troubling me."

André sighed. "It is by an odd coincidence that you and I meet at this pass," he said after a moment's silence. "Tell Miss Digby her brother refused this errand. From her last conversation with me, I happen to know 'twill please her to hear it. If she ever tells you anything of what I said then, you will only have to remember to-day to forgive me."

CHAPTER XLIX.

A SOLDIER'S DEATH.

Do not therefore
Ascribe the perturbation of my soul
To a servile fear of death.

THE UNNATURAL COMBAT.

THAT night, Captain Aaron Ogden of the New Jersey line was sent to Paulus Hook, with an official account of Major André's trial for Sir Henry Clinton. His Excellency bade him upon his way call at the Marquess La Fayette's quarters for further instructions—the Marquess commanding the Light Infantry at the point nearest to the British lines. The Marquess accordingly instructed Ogden to arrive late at Paulus Hook, get asked to stop the night, and in the course of conversation tell the Captain of the Guard about that one only way whereby André could be saved.

It all fell out as His Excellency had planned ; and as soon as Ogden had observed that he was pretty certain that that exchange (though no other) would be accepted, the Captain of the Guard slipped out, and, crossing the river, told Sir Henry, who, late as it was, was holding a council. But no one could have soberly imagined it possible that he could give up General Arnold to the vengeance of his enemies. It has been said that Arnold, in an agony of remorse at André's danger, exclaimed that he would go back and die. But he did not insist on going ; and if he had, he would have placed Sir Henry in the vilest dilemma in which ever commander found himself.

He was already in a cruel strait. His hands were tied, and he would have been covered with ridicule, if the tragedy had not been so terrible that only the Devil himself could have laughed at it. But he did his best—though Fred Digby always maintained that Sir Henry was a d——d poor hand at a rescue. He wrote an urgent letter to General Washington—couched in terms as respectful as though he had been addressing a Marshal of France ; and he sent old General Robertson (Miss Digby's particular aversion in former days, but a person of consequence), and with him the Lieutenant-Governor of the city, and Mr. Smith, the Chief-Justice—brother to Joshua, now awaiting

his own trial for complicity in Arnold's plot—to Dobbs' Ferry, to confer with General Greene, and try to persuade him to admit their plea—that Major André, being furnished with a pass from General Arnold, could not legally be considered a spy. They were also to offer in exchange for him any one whom General Washington might be pleased to name.

They came up to Dobbs' Ferry in the *Greyhound*, and with them Colonel Beverley Robinson. Only General Robertson was permitted to land. He conferred long with Greene—urging everything he could think of, and offering everything but the one thing which could not be offered—entreating finally that the case might be referred to Rochambeau and Knyphausen.

But Greene was immovable. The prisoner had confessed that he brought no flag, and by all the laws of war he must die. Among Robertson's arguments was an insolent letter from Arnold, in which the traitor threatened a bloody retaliation if André were harmed. But Greene only flung down the letter at the old General's feet, and could hardly be induced to carry it to His Excellency.

Five o'clock on Sunday afternoon had been fixed for the execution, and a vast concourse assembled at that hour on a hill a little way out of Tappan—whereon the night before the gibbet had been set up. But the conference at Dobbs' Ferry was so long, that the execution was deferred till to-morrow. General Washington was waiting to see whether Benedict Arnold would come to redeem the prisoner.

Except to visit Major André a second time (at his particular request), Jasper never left his brother that day. Noel's fever had abated, but he was too weak to rise from his bed, and was in a pitiable state of exhaustion of body and mind. Although he never said so in so many words, he hoped to the very last that Arnold would expiate his treason by returning, when he learned that this was the only way of saving André. "Surely," he thought, as his memory went back to the march to Quebec and the battles at Saratoga—"surely, when he sees how low he has fallen and remembers what he once was, he must feel such unutterable tortures, that death itself will seem preferable."

"I cannot understand it!" he exclaimed piteously. "'Tis too monstrous—too unnatural—it were better never to have been born. Oh, Jasper! how can a man bring dishonour on a good name? Think of it, brother—the infamy of it lasts from generation to generation! A name too that would else have

been remembered with so much honour! 'Tis thought contrary to nature that a man should kill himself—but what's that to covering himself with shame?—to be remembered only as a traitor? And 'tis so easy to be faithful—merely faithful. A dog may be so! One may be unfortunate, mistaken—anything—but not false. Surely, surely, dear brother, the shame of it will kill him!"

"I fear not, or he had never brought himself to do it," said Jasper; "but, you may be sure, his punishment will be terrible, and that it has begun already. The opportunity for a great expiation has been given him—perhaps Heaven's last act of grace to a man who had some great qualities in him; but do not, dear brother, let yourself indulge the hope that he will embrace it. He would have returned instantly, if his treason had left him with honour enough ever to return at all."

"Ah, dear Jasper!" said Noel with a heart-breaking sigh; "if you had seen him as I have, you would, I think, be with me almost ready to reproach Heaven itself for having permitted him to be lost! He was deeply wronged; but now even that will be forgot! Oh, brother! what are all other griefs and misfortunes to those we can inflict on ourselves? To be a mark for everlasting contempt! Sure he must wish he could cease to be! He has slain his own fame. You cannot feel it as acutely as I—you was not with him as I was——"

"Do I not feel it?" exclaimed Jasper—tears of sharp pain starting from his eyes, and his face quivering. "He has not only brought infamy on his own name—he has spoiled some of the most glorious pages of his country's story! Those great deeds we were all so proud of—we shall almost choose to have them forgot, lest some one should remind us that he who did them was afterwards a traitor!"

Jasper was sorry he had allowed these bitter words to escape him, as soon as he had uttered them. They cut Noel to the quick.

"'Tis true," he said, with a groan of anguish, his eyes fixed on Jasper's with a look of despair; "and some of his dishonour will cling to me, and to all those whose names are joined with his."

"No, no! there can be no dishonour in merely having been deceived," cried Jasper, wringing his brother's hand as it lay on the bedclothes. "These are morbid imaginations, dear boy—dismiss them! Your faithfulness does but shine the

brighter against his falseness ! But if a good man is an honour to his country, a traitor must be owned to be a disgrace ; I meant no more. No shadow can ever fall on you—such as you was never yet a traitor since the world stood. Malice itself could not suspect you !”

“ You think so, because you love me,” said Noel sadly. “ Why should I not be suspected ? Now he has proved false, who is to be trusted ? ”

“ Most of us, I hope ! ” said Jasper confidently. “ Look back ; how few traitors have there been, and of what sort were they ? Human nature is weak enough, God knows, but great baseness is much less common than great goodness—’tis more conspicuous, that’s all—as one fire can light up a whole horizon. And—I would not say it to you before, dear boy, lest I should seem to triumph over you—but there was nothing in Arnold to make it so impossible he should be a traitor.”

“ Oh, brother ! such valour—such resolve,” says Noel, protesting.

“ Valour is a God-like quality, and so is resolution,” said Jasper. “ The man that dares not venture even his life when his duty and honour demand it, is a poor creature—not worthy to be called a man. Yet there’s a higher courage than that which can rush on in the heat of battle. ’Tis a harder task to stand still—to endure misrepresentation—to hear others extolled at our expense. How many times do you not think Washington has resisted the temptation to risk all on one cast, and silence his detractors by a hero’s death ? Yet, once only—in despair at the cowardice of those dastards at Knipp’s Bay—he forgot that he had not the right to die.” Jasper said this with much heat ; but he could never speak of Washington without being moved.

“ Then for resolution,” he went on more calmly. “ Weakness is, I own, a kind of wickedness—perhaps the worst kind, on the whole ; ’tis certainly the most dangerous, because we are apt to think it harmless ; but strength is like a sword, good or bad, according to the use we put it to. ’Tis a dangerous thing to put glory first. There’s no safety but in being more desirous to do our duty, than to be praised for the doing of it.”

“ I remember you said once you feared he was too ambitious,” observed Noel after a pause. “ Yet I’ve often heard you say, no good man could be insensible to the praise of other good men. He was, I’m sure, sensible enough to it, and to

have lost it will destroy him. The thought of André suffering through him, will be enough to embitter every hour of his existence. If he lets André die, he is lost beyond redemption !”

Jasper’s second interview with Major André was if possible more painful than the first. He had by this time abandoned all hope of life, and was now chiefly agitated by anxiety concerning the mode of his death. On this subject he had written to General Washington in a strain of pathetic dignity which no one will ever read unmoved, so long as misfortune borne with gentleness and fortitude can touch the hearts of men.

At this last interview, André spoke of his old, only love—this news would grieve her, he said, smiling sadly. He did not know that she was dead—had died six months ago. Death was merciful to her.

“I have one last request to make you, Colonel Fleming,” he said, as they took leave of each other. “I hope—I believe—that General Washington will grant me a soldier’s death—but in any case, I shall esteem it an act of great kindness on your part if I see you to-morrow at the place where I am to die.”

He was holding the Colonel’s hand as he spoke ; he retained it, as he added, looking fixedly at Jasper, who was obliged to turn his head away, a little to conceal his emotion,——

“Yours will be, I think, the only face which a week ago was not strange to me.”

“I will be there,” said Jasper, “since you wish it——”

He could not utter another word, and Tallmadge, who was in the room, was sobbing audibly.

“I see I must set you all an example of fortitude,” says André in a somewhat unsteady voice. Then he wrung Jasper’s hand, and, abruptly turning away, sat down at the table, and seemed as though he would resume his writing ; but long after Colonel Fleming had left him, he sat with one hand shading his eyes, while with the other he idly traced lines which he erased as soon as they were written.

On his way out, Jasper passed two little dwarfish fellows—servants of Major André, who had been permitted to come to him from New York. They were in tears, and one of them, when he saw Colonel Fleming come out, implored him to say if nothing could be done to save their master? Was it true the gibbet was set up already? The Colonel’s agitation was sufficient answer to their fears, but he replied that if it was so,

he had not seen it; and returned to his quarters so much affected that it was a long while before he felt himself calm enough to go in to Noel, who was awaiting him in an agony of impatience.

As the time approached for the execution, Noel's anguish rose almost to distraction.

"Is it possible, brother," he asked, "for a man that was not born a monster to wait and see another man die a shameful death by his fault? If he does it, he is no better than a common murderer!"

A little before noon next day, Major André set out on his last journey. All the general officers then in camp—except His Excellency and his staff—followed General Greene, who led the way. Then came a guard of five hundred men, and in the midst of them a wagon with a coffin in it. Just behind the wagon walked the prisoner. He leaned on the arms of the two Captains especially appointed to guard him; but his step was as light as though he had been going on parade, and it was noticed that he kept time to the band, which played a lively tune. He was dressed in full uniform, except that of course he wore no sword, or sash, or gorget. In his bright scarlet coat faced with green, his buff waistcoat, and small-clothes, with his hair carefully dressed in a long queue, he appeared the least mournful figure there.

All the way was lined with people, who saw him pass with grave and pitying faces. One little girl, suddenly stepping out of the crowd, thrust a bag of fresh-gathered peaches into his hand. He smiled and thanked her, and carried them a little way; but he was come to that hour when the grasshopper is a burden, and he was presently glad to give them to some one near him.

He had received no reply to his letter. General Washington had, it was said in camp, been disposed to yield; but Greene had insisted that if Major André was not a spy, he had incurred no penalty whatever. If they did not hang him, they ought to let him go—there could be nothing between. And so, as his request could not be granted, His Excellency had thought it both more proper and more merciful not to reply at all.

André talked as he went, and betrayed no sign of discomposure, until, at the foot of the ascent which led up to the

appointed place, he came in sight of the gallows. As he saw this symbol of ignominy rising up high into the clear blue air, his countenance fell.

"Gentlemen, I am disappointed!" he said. "I expected my request would have been granted!"

As they came near the gallows-foot, he looked round, and bowed to those officers standing by whom he knew—among them was Colonel Fleming, who, as he returned this last salute, had still ringing in his ears his brother's despairing cry, that if Arnold let Major André suffer in his stead, he was lost beyond redemption.

Honourable men cannot help attributing some lingering sentiment of honour even to the basest. In spite of all reason and probability Jasper found himself nervously starting at a slight movement in the vast crowd which made a living wall around the ground; he knew it was madness to think of it, and yet he involuntarily conjured up a vision of a horseman furiously galloping up the hill—tearing his way through the crowd—and only drawing rein at the foot of the gallows.

But there was nothing; the crowd had closed up again, Jasper sternly told himself that traitors do not come back to die. He had never expected that Arnold would come back, but that instant's illusion brought the horror of the treason before him as though he had never even yet fully realised it. But for his promise to André, he would have fled from the place, that he might not behold what was to come.

Meanwhile, the wagon had been driven under the gallows. André, halting a few yards from it, once more looked round—perhaps he too had dreamed of that horseman coming to die in his stead! Then, as the guard fell in, and the hangman stood ready, he bowed his head a little, and looked down at himself, rolling over a stone the while with his foot, biting his lips, and shaking his head, as though he were thinking,—“This surely is not the fruit that grows on gallows-trees!”

He was rather pale—except for a small flush which came and went on his left cheek. For a moment or two he seemed to struggle with a choking in his throat, but he betrayed no confusion; and when, all being ready, the commanding officer desired him to mount the wagon, he shook hands with Tallmadge and the rest—who were all in tears—and, going to the back of the wagon, laid his hand on the side, and made as though he would spring up into it. But the shadow of the

gibbet lay on it, and he faltered, and did not take the leap, but climbed up, and stood there, beside his coffin—while all the people held their breath. There was silence so deep, that if that horseman had been on his way, they could have heard him coming.

While André stood thus, the commanding officer (it was Colonel Scammell, the Deputy-Adjutant-General) read the order of execution.

Major André had stepped upon the coffin, and paced it out once—then, standing still, his hands resting on his hips, he let his eyes roam over the wide landscape and the wider blue sky—looking high above that grim bridge of the gallows which spanned it—and the vast silent multitude, come there to see him die.

So he stood, while Colonel Scammell (the sun flashing on his drawn sword, as he sat on his horse close beside the wagon) read from the paper in his hand.

“Major André,” says Scammell, when the reading is over, “if you have anything to say, you can speak now, for you have but a short time to live.”

Major André uncovers, and bows as he replies,—

“I have nothing more to say, gentlemen, but this—you all bear me witness that I meet my fate as a brave man.”

Then he gives his hat to his weeping servant, and takes the halter from the hangman—who has let his beard grow and blackened his face to disguise his identity—and puts it over his head, first unpinning his stock and shirt-collar. He draws the knot close under his ear, and has already blindfolded his own eyes, with a white handkerchief which he took from the pocket of his coat—when Scammell says aloud that his arms must be bound. On this, Major André takes off the handkerchief while he finds another—not losing his calmness even at this cruel moment—and then replacing it, has this time seen his last of earthly sights.

The hangman bound his arms behind him—the only office he had been permitted to perform—and, getting off the wagon, went to his horse's head.

There was an awful silence, and then Scammell let his sword fall—the signal agreed upon—and the wagon was driven off, so suddenly, that there was no struggle.

After the first tremendous swing, the quivering rope slowly

grew still. Long after that, the multitude stood in death-like silence, not one of all that vast assembly stirred or spoke (or so at least it seemed) for full half an hour. At the end of that time, with every precaution of decency and respect, the body was cut down and laid in the coffin.

CHAPTER L.

ALTHEA SURRENDERS.

"AND Arnold lives!" said Tallmadge in Jasper's ear, as the multitude, still hushed and awe-stricken, began slowly to disperse. "Will you say now, Fleming, that the ways of Providence are just?"

To which Jasper replied by asking him almost fiercely whether he would choose rather to be Benedict Arnold, or to be hanged to-morrow?

No investigation revealed any more than was already known of Arnold's plot. All the officers connected with his command were fully acquitted of any knowledge of his designs. An impenetrable mystery still surrounds his treason. We do not know when or by what means he made his first overtures to Sir Henry Clinton. André, so frank and unreserved otherwise, on these points maintained an inviolate silence. In a note in his own hand, made in his copy of Stedman's History, Sir Henry merely says that he had been "about eighteen months" in correspondence with Arnold. Allowing for the vagueness of this statement, we may probably conclude that Arnold's treason dated from the attack made upon him by the Executive Council of Pennsylvania, and the final refusal of Congress to pass his accounts. But all the actors in this dark story seem to have agreed to tell as little as possible. Even conjecture is very meagre on the subject, and can only show us as the possible go-between, a certain lieutenant of the British Army who was in Philadelphia during part of the year 1779, and who had been suspected of being a spy.

The most searching inquiries failed likewise to establish the guilt of Joshua Smith, who persisted in his first assertion, that he had acted in good faith, believing that General Arnold's mysterious visitor brought him information from the enemy.

But though Smith saved his neck, very few of his countrymen believed he was as innocent as he professed to be.

General Branhholm, who was stationed at Dobbs' Ferry, came down to Tappan several times to see his son ; and as soon as the formal acquittal was pronounced, insisted on his asking for leave and going to Philadelphia, where his mother then was. General Branhholm expected to be ordered south with his brigade—as it was essential to immediately check Lord Cornwallis's progress, and he promised Noel an appointment on his own staff. This prospect somewhat roused Noel from the apathetic dejection into which he had fallen, and he set out for Philadelphia with his brother—who had also obtained a short leave of absence—not wholly unable to look forward to the future.

"I must begin again," he said to Jasper, as they were on their journey. "I see him wherever I look. I shall never care to speak of Quebec or Saratoga again, since I can never do so without remembering him, and knowing that every one else is thinking of him too."

Noel insisted on arriving after dark ; he could not, he said, endure to be recognised as he rode through the streets. So it was late when they drew up at the Slate-Roof House.

They found Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Fleming and Mary all there. Jasper and Noel were expected, but it was not known when they would arrive, and the Flemings had come to ask for news of them.

Mrs. Branhholm took Noel away, before Mrs. Fleming had time to make many pious reflections on the depravity of our hearts and the danger of setting up idols.

"Your father has wrote me all about it," she said, when they were alone. "I understand it all ; you need not tell me what you've felt, I felt it all for you. But no one can cast any reproach on you, my dearest boy, and I hope you never doubted but your mother would still be as proud of you as ever."

It was for the capacity to feel and speak thus on trying occasions, that Mrs. Branhholm's sons thought her the noblest of mothers. As a housekeeper, and in everyday matters, Mrs. Fleming was a much more admirable person ; but when Mary's heart ached or her courage failed her, it was to her aunt that she went—knowing that whenever things went wrong, Mrs. Branhholm could show something not far below heroism. She

even allowed Noel to talk about his heart being broken, and there being nothing left to live for, without more than the very gentlest of reproaches, and (though she herself was almost heartbroken at the thought of it) she forced herself to speak cheerfully of the coming Southern campaign, in which he would serve under his own father.

Jasper had sent a message to Althea that he was in Philadelphia, and would come to see her early in the morning.

Mary had prepared him to find her deeply distressed at all that had happened, but he was shocked when he saw how wan she looked.

"My darling girl!" he exclaimed, as he kissed her; "what have you done? you are so pale——"

At the moment, however, Althea was not pale. The blood had rushed painfully to her face—her eyes were full of tears.

"Oh, Jasper!" she said, and then with a great sigh she let her head sink on his shoulder, and stole her hand into his.

"I knew you would feel it most acutely," he said in a low voice. "Believe me, dear, I understand and share your feelings."

"You cannot know how I have felt the dishonour of it," she said after a pause. Then, lifting up her head, she seemed to be going to say more, but could not.

"I must say it," she said presently, gently putting him a little from her, but letting her right hand rest on his shoulder. She hung her head, her colour came and went, and she spoke with a painful effort.

"I do not know how to say it," she began. "Yet I owe it you. 'Tis perhaps a foolish woman's reasoning, but I've thought much about what has happened—there's a baseness in it, which makes me think there's been something wrong at the foundation of our dealings. I am ashamed, Jasper—my cousin Maverick does not understand it—she thinks 'tis base to be a traitor, but no shame to try to profit by one. She calls me high-flown, when I say I can scarce look you in the face——"

Jasper was beginning a passionate protestation, but she stopped him.

"There's more I must say"—she hid her face on his shoulder as she said it. "I told you I could not feel 'twas right we should be happy until these troubles were over—but now—if you wish it——"

"If! If I wish it, Althea!" he cried, snatching her to

him. Althea had expected Jasper to receive this gracious announcement with pleasure—and even with gratitude—but he showed such extreme emotion, that she could not help telling him that if she had known he desired it so much as this, she did not think her resolution could have held firm.

On this, Jasper confessed to having been tormented by a superstitious fancy that he would die before the time came when Althea would consent to marry him. This fancy, he said, had pursued him from the first moment of his happiness.

"I went away with the full conviction of it," he said; "and that first night after I left you, when I found out that the Marquess was to be surprised, I thought my presentiment was to be fulfilled instantly. Even three weeks ago, when we were crossing the Hudson, and were all so puzzled at seeing the *Vulture* venture so high up the river, I imagined my time was coming. I had planned it all out—there would be an attempt made to capture His Excellency as he went to see the Count—and the utmost I hoped for was to fall in his defence. So do we multiply our real pains with fanciful ones, as though those which we cannot avoid were not enough!"

Jasper laughed as he confessed to this weakness, and added that since Althea had promised to marry him at once, he felt sure he should live to be a hundred. Althea, however, took it very seriously, and protested she could not forgive herself for having, though unknowingly, caused him so much pain. But it was, she said, a just punishment, that, having so often intentionally grieved him, she should have been condemned to go on doing it, when what she most desired in the world was to make him happy. But Jasper would not let her utter these self-reproaches—he vowed she was more cruel to herself than she had ever been to him, and said that he believed he was given to torment himself, and should doubtless have found some other way of doing it, if he had not had this.

"We must all die one day," he added; "but I have had a great desire to live to call you my wife."

Jasper's confession so wrought upon Althea, that she allowed him to hurry on their marriage with so little delay, that there was not even time for her to have a new gown made. Mrs. Maverick said such a thing was unheard of, and asked what Mrs. Theodosia would say when she came to hear of it? She would certainly think we was a parcel of savage barbarians!

But Althea observed that she might think what she pleased

—if Jasper did not mind an old gown, it was a very small matter what Cousin Theo might choose to say. Whereupon Jasper hastened to protest that it would be ridiculous to delay the marriage on such an account—adding as his own conviction that no gown could possibly be more becoming than the one which Althea had on at that moment.

Fred's letter reached his sister in the midst of her hasty preparations for her marriage. Colonel Fleming was exceedingly gratified at the way in which Fred expressed himself towards him, and said it was but one more item of the great debt he owed him.

"I can never forget his generous kindness when he came to me in Boston jail," he said, much moved—and this time Althea did not resent the allusion. "He has a heart that yields to every generous impulse, and is as tender as he is brave."

"Ah, Jasper," said Althea sadly, "when I compare his behaviour with my own I cannot forgive myself! When you was away, the remembrance of it tortured me. You, I fear, must often have recalled it."

"If I did," he said, "'twas only as a man will sometimes suffer over again in his dreams the pangs of a wound that has long since healed. Do not reproach yourself—the cruellest part was not your doing. The struggle I had with myself was far harder. The event is better than my fears, but I can never cease to wish that I had not been my brother's rival."

* * * * *

The wedding was as quiet as possible, the only persons present, not of the family, being two old friends of Mrs. Maverick's, who lived in Philadelphia. Jasper had felt some delicacy about Noel; but to his infinite relief, as soon as Noel heard that the day was fixed, he said that as Mary was to be Althea's bridesmaid he hoped his brother would accept him for his groomsman; and he performed his part—if somewhat gravely—in a manner which every one said was admirable. Not that there was very much to do, since the ceremony took place in Mrs. Maverick's own drawing-room; but, as she remarked afterwards, it would have been very easy to make everybody uncomfortable, whereas Major Branzholm made it all go off easily.

In spite of Colonel Fleming's flattering opinion of her every-day gown, Althea put on the silver brocade to be married in (it was of the very best material, and still looked as good as new); and the Colonel admitted that he had been wrong—the

brocade being even more becoming than the other. He added that he believed he had seen it before, and had then thought it remarkably becoming.

"It must have been at the Mischianza then, Colonel Fleming," says Mrs. Maverick, "for I've never been able to get her to wear it since."

Althea had repaired the torn ruffle so cunningly, that no one but Mrs. Maverick would have noticed there was anything the matter with it. Mrs. Maverick must needs (before the whole wedding party) call Mrs. Branhholm's attention to the darn, as a monument of skill—whereupon Althea gave Jasper a look in which smiles and tears contended for the mastery. Mrs. Branhholm vowed she should never have had the patience to do anything so exquisite; and Colonel Fleming himself requested to see it, and, having gravely examined the ruffle, had the malice to protest he thought the darn rather improved the effect than otherwise. This, as Mrs. Maverick told him, was perfectly preposterous, and only showed that he did not understand the value of the lace.

There was a friendly contest between General Branhholm and Mr. Fleming, as to who should give away the bride; but the General finally established his own pretensions on the score of there being some kind of connection between the Digbys and the Randolphins—who, being undoubtedly related to the Branhholms, brought Miss Digby at once into their family circle.

This matter being amicably arranged, nothing further occurred worth recording. Mrs. Branhholm cried one moment and laughed the next; Mrs. Lawrence Fleming shook her head with a deal of feeling; and Mrs. Maverick took an opportunity to tell Colonel Fleming privately, that—whatever he might imagine to the contrary from Althea's refusing to marry him before—she could assure him that he would have a wife who adored him.

Jasper repeated this to Althea, who—instead of smiling, as he expected—said, with her eyes full of tears, that he would never know how much she loved him, and that it had often cut her to the heart to think how cold she must appear.

"You wrong yourself, my Althea," he replied very tenderly. "I have never known a moment's uneasiness, since you gave me that first kiss. How could I, when everything about you expressed nothing but tenderness? Your words have been kindness itself, but your looks and your manner have said far more

than your words. I've never asked you (but once) if you loved me, because there was no need."

"And I have asked you a hundred times if you was satisfied that I loved you," she said, "because my conscience told me how much right you had to doubt it. But if you could see my heart, you'd see far more love there than I can ever show."

* * * * *

Jasper took his bride home to Pine Street for the few days yet remaining of his leave, after which she accompanied him to the camp.

Mrs. Maverick chose to remain behind in Philadelphia. She had, she observed, gone a long way; but to find herself in the rebel camp (unless her duty called her there, as was the case with Althea), was going a step too far. If Mrs. Maverick appears unreasonable for talking thus so late in the day, it must be remembered in her excuse that the Provincial cause had seldom appeared more desperate than at this moment.

CHAPTER LI.

FINIS CORONAT OPUS.

THERE is much more to tell, but very little more can be told.

Althea spent the winter in camp at New Windsor. That winter was almost as severe as the last had been, and she endured many hardships—that is, she found out afterwards that she must have done so, for at the time she did not notice the fact particularly.

Noel went south with his father, when General Greene was appointed to succeed Gates. This was early in November. Greene had a fever hanging about him, and had intended to stay several days in Philadelphia; but Cornwallis was rapidly advancing towards Virginia, so Greene resolved to hurry on, with only a single day's delay, to see his wife, and take his leave of Washington—from whom all through the war he had never yet been separated.

General Greene's stay in Philadelphia was thus so short that Noel's farewells had to be said in haste. On the last day, Mrs. Branhholm went to beg Mary of her parents—she must, she said, have some one to keep her company after her husband

and Noel should be gone, until she went to join Jasper and Althea in winter quarters, which she had resolved to do.

Mrs. Branhholm had, however, another motive for desiring Mary's company. She was extremely uneasy lest the effect of past events on Noel's mind should make him unduly reckless; and, being endowed with a considerable portion of feminine shrewdness, had reflected that it could do no harm (and might do a great deal of good) if Mary gave him a talking-to on the subject. She imparted her fears to Mary, and easily obtained her promise to speak to him.

Mary took the first opportunity of their being alone.

"I have promised your mother, dear Noel," she said very gravely, "to remind you that, with so many people that love you, you ought not to have spoke as you did when you first came back. It has made us all very unhappy. I mean about your having nothing to live for. Think how much more terrible it will be for us to know you are gone to the field in such sentiments, and how doubly bitter the recollection of them would make it, if—if we was left to think you had perhaps cast your life away, out of a sort of despair."

The picture was too much for Mary; she burst into tears.

"Don't cry, Mary; I promise you I'll do nothing desperate! I'm sorry I ever said that—I don't mean it indeed!" said Noel, with great earnestness. Then he pulled Mary's hands from her face, and said hurriedly,—"There's one thing you could say, Mary, that would prevent my ever thinking such a thing again. If I thought 'twould make any difference to you whether I came back or not, and that I should not find you married to some coxcomb or other, not worthy of you—and I forgot——"

"You've no right and no cause to speak so, Noel!" says Mary, trying to seem angry. "You know very well it would make a difference."

"But how much, Mary? how much? Nay, I will see your face; look at me, and tell me how much difference 'twould make to you if I was never to come back?"

"Oh, how can you talk so?" sobs Mary. "You know very well that 'twould make all the difference in the world—that 'twould break my heart!"

"Then if I come back, shall I find you willing to put up with me? You always used to understand me, Mary, but I'm changed—perhaps now you'll not care——"

"Do you think so ill of me as to imagine I should care for you less when you was unhappy?" said Mary softly.

He drew her into his arms as he said,—

"Then if I come back, Mary, will it be to you? May I count on that?"

"One would think, to hear you," says Mary, "I was the greatest flirt in the world."

Noel contrived at last to get a more satisfactory reply than this, and with it he went away next day.

* * * * *

The fate of Major André made a profound sensation in England—though as little as possible was said about it publicly. The King made such poor amends as he could; he conferred a baronetcy on André's brother, and erected a monument to him in Westminster Abbey, with an inscription in which the nature of the service in which André perished, and the fate which befell him, are alike concealed beneath a decent veil of words. It was many a long year before the question of whether or no he came under the description of a spy could be approached with even the appearance of calmness; and many more before his death ceased to be called "the only blot on Washington's fame." His enemies had wept for him; his friends might be excused if they found it hard to be just. Many of us have stood before his monument in the Abbey. As one stands there, and thinks of André's story, those great words, Duty, Glory, and Honour, take a more solemn meaning, and treachery and infidelity are seen in all their hideous nakedness. It is said that Benedict Arnold was once seen standing there

* * * * *

John André died on the gallows—the most honourable man who ever went on a dishonourable errand; and Benedict Arnold, escaping Sergeant Champe and the Marquess La Fayette, lived to waste Virginia and burn New London. We may be sure the Devil never showed him *that* picture in his magic-lantern! It is now admitted that Arnold was not voluntarily guilty of the most frightful parts of it, but it is fit that he should disappear from his country's story amidst the flames of Fort Griswold.

We have forgotten him. But on the books of the Bank of England there is an entry in which the name of Benedict Arnold is set down over against part of the price for which he sold his soul; it will help witness against him, when all the

Books are opened, and every secret thing is brought to remembrance.

* * * * *

Noel Branhholm was in all Greene's Southern battles, and also witnessed Lord Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown.

With Cornwallis's surrender the war was virtually ended, and the event certain—although for fifteen months longer a dribbling contest was kept up. Althea's eldest son was more than a year old, when at last the peace was signed, which acknowledged the Independence of the United States.

Long before that, Noel and Mary were married. Noel never entirely recovered from the shock of his discovering that his idolised commander was a traitor who had sold his country. His nature was too sweet to be embittered, but it was saddened, and much of its brightness was lost. At times, he would seem almost his old self, but at others he would fall into fits of melancholy, from which only Jasper could effectually arouse him. He could never quite divest himself of the fancy that some shadow of the dishonour clung about himself—nor was it altogether a fancy. So great was the abhorrence for Arnold's treason, that, if it had been possible, his countrymen would have rewritten their history, with all his great deeds left out.

Mary did not allow Noel to brood over these things in silence, as he was inclined to do. When she saw the dark mood coming over him, she would set the children to ask him to tell them the story of the march to Quebec—in which he never forgot to repeat how once, when his endurance had nearly failed, the vision of their mother, walking by the banks of the Chaudière, had put new life into him. That vision—illusion born of hunger and exhaustion as it was—was yet prophetic of the part which Mary was to play in his life.

But this was in future years, long after this story closes.

* * * * *

The eight years' struggle came to an end at last, and the United Provinces of North America took their place among the nations.

On the famous 4th of December, when General Washington took that brotherly farewell of his officers at Fraunces' Tavern, Jasper and Noel were both there. They were among the crowd of war-worn veterans who followed their General, along Broadway and down to Whitehall Ferry, and stood watching him (when they could see him for their tears), as he waved his

last farewells, until the point of the Battery shut him out from their sight.

Even then the brothers did not move. They stood there, arm in arm, until they were left almost alone.

"Surely," said Noel at last, as they also turned to depart,— "surely, dear brother, this was well done, and our gains are a thousandfold more than our losses, let the croakers say what they will!"

"It was well done, brother," said Jasper; "for we could not have been men and done otherwise—but our hardest work is still before us—and to reckon up our loss and gain, we must wait a hundred years."

EPILOGUE.

MAJOR DIGBY was among the officers included in Lord Cornwallis's capitulation at Yorktown, but by the influence of Colonel Fleming and Major Branzholm, he was immediately permitted to go to Philadelphia on his parole. He there found his sister, and remained with her until Lord Cornwallis returned to England. He was on board the same vessel which carried his lordship, who had conceived a great regard for the honest young Major when he served under him in the South—but Fred's satisfaction at this was very considerably marred by the circumstance that General Arnold and his family were also on board, and by his lordship's being so civil to Arnold.

Lord Cornwallis (more fortunate than poor Burgoyne) was received favourably at court. He presented Major Digby to His Majesty, to whom he told the story of how the Major had tried to fetch succour to General Burgoyne.

Although, therefore, all hopes were over of any advantage accruing from those Virginian estates, which had proved such veritable "Castles in Spain," Major Digby had no such very great cause to rail at Dame Fortune—especially as she shortly let him know she had another favour in store for him.

One of the first things which Major Digby did on his return to England, was to go down into Northamptonshire, to fulfil poor Lieutenant Perkins's last injunctions. He was received by the simple-minded country parson's family as a great man indeed, and they thought they had performed an act of

amazing daring when they entreated him to stay a few days with them—sleeping, however, at the village inn, as there was not an inch to spare at the Vicarage.

Fred had to fight all his battles over again for these good people, who thought the *Gazette* not a patch upon him. There were many very affecting scenes in the course of these narrations—the saddest of all being told little by little, as each member of the family would take the Major aside, and ask him to tell them more about dear Will.

Having a most sympathetic and never-wearied audience, the Major astonished himself by his own eloquence. His account of poor Major André melted them all to tears, from the Vicar himself to Susan—who, on hearing that the King had graciously received General Arnold, exclaimed indignantly that she wondered how His Majesty could abide the sight of him—and added, that, for her part, if she was poor Major André's brother, or any relation to him, she would tell General Arnold he was his murderer, and challenge him to a duel!

"Susan! Susan! these are very un-Christian sentiments!" says the Vicar reprovingly—at which Susan looked abashed, but not repentant.

"I fear, sir, we all felt pretty much the same," said Digby. "We was in a monstrous awkward position; we was obliged—that is, Sir Henry was—to treat him with a show of civility, but none of the Generals could abide acting with him, and Sir Henry was never quite sure of him. We was in a great dilemma as long as he was in our army; and now he's here, we don't know what the devil to do with him. I own I feel something like Miss Susan. The day his lordship was so kind as to present me I saw him at court—His Majesty was speaking to him before everybody—I thought I should have been sick! And poor General Burgoyne had the door shut in his face!"

Susan was grown up into a charming young woman, and as the poor Lieutenant had so particularly mentioned her, it was only natural that Fred should exert his memory to the utmost on her behalf. It was Susan who took him into the church, to show him that tablet to the captain slain at Minden, of which poor Will had spoken when he was dying. The Major was much affected on seeing it, and that evening, in a very neatly worded speech, requested permission of Mr. Perkins to take upon himself the placing of a similar memorial to his departed friend. He was aware, he said, with much feeling, that as a stranger to

them he had perhaps scarcely the right to make such a request ; but as having fought by Will's side, and been with him at the last, he trusted not to be refused.

"My dear sir," says the old gentleman—a venerable figure, with his long white hair and his threadbare cassock—"we must for ever be your debtors for what you have already done. I have been putting aside a certain sum each year, since my dear boy fell, for the purpose you name—but the lay-rector takes the great tithes—and I have been obliged to expend a considerable sum on a chimney which was blown down two years ago next Michaelmas ; and I have often feared I should not live to see my dear son's name recorded on those sacred walls within which I baptized him."

The Vicar said this with an old-fashioned dignity, which no mere report of his words can convey.

"I shall consider, sir," says Fred respectfully, "that I am permitted to show this mark of regard to my poor friend, and I thank you very kindly for the honour you do me. If you will be so good as to let me know any views you may have had, as to the way you would like it done, we will set about it at once."

Many were the discussions which followed. The Vicar was easy enough to satisfy as to the form of the tablet—indeed, it was Susan who finally decided that point, and the tablet was made from her drawing. But the Vicar took so much pains with the epitaph, that Fred despaired of the masons ever getting to work. He prepared at least a score, and it took all Susan's eloquence to persuade him not to insist on selecting a Latin one, in which there were undoubtedly many beautiful sentiments very chastely expressed.

"But, then, what's the good of it, if not a soul in the village can read a word of it?" urges Susan. "Dear father, do let it be in English—'twill perhaps inspire some of the village boys to serve their country."

"I believe on my conscience it might, daughter!" exclaims the Vicar, much struck with this suggestion ; "I will—yes, I will sacrifice what was after all perhaps a useless display of scholarship. (I had the prize for Latin verse when I was at Brasenose, Major Digby.) It shall be in English! This dear girl, Major Digby, has an astonishing good sense ; her mother and I frequently remark that you may see in her an old head on young shoulders. Bless me, where can I have put that rough draft? Ah, here it is! Now, Major Digby, if you will

kindly run your eye over that, I think you will find it a good groundwork on which to begin."

The Vicar produced a sheet of letter-paper, so scored and corrected, that the Major was obliged to ask assistance in deciphering it—indeed, it required the united efforts of himself, the Vicar, and Susan to make out to a certainty what was intended. When this was at last accomplished, and a fair copy made by Susan, the Major pronounced it to be an admirable production. It was to this effect:—

SACRED to the MEMORY
of

Lieutenant WILLIAM PERKINS, 29th Foot,
Third son of Gregory Perkins, M.A., Vicar of this Parish,
And Anne his wife.

He was born March 15, 1757, and entered the Army
At a very early age.

On the breaking out of the unhappy discontents
In our North American Colonies,
His Regiment was ordered to Boston.

He took part in the action of Bunker's Hill,
And was present during the whole of the operations
On Long Island and in New Jersey.

He accompanied the expedition from Canada
Under Lieut.-Gen. Sir John Burgoyne,
And died October 8, 1777,

Of wounds received the previous day,
In the Battle of Saratoga.

Thus ending a brief and blameless career,
In the performance of his duty to his
KING and Country.

This memorial is erected by his friend and comrade Major Digby,
To commemorate his virtues.

The last two lines were the production of Major Digby, and Susan thought them the most beautiful of all.

When the tablet was fixed in its place (it is in the chancel, just over the Vicar's pew, and exactly facing that of the captain who fell at Minden), Major Digby went down to see it. He had by this time been presented to the King—an honour which had procured him a second in the shape of a letter from Mrs. Theodosia, informing him that she was glad to hear of his safe return. Had heard that his sister (who was always a remark-

able wilful girl) had married a rebel Captain, who had been a cobbler, or something as low, before he turned rebel, but hoped it was not true. In any case, would be pleased if he would come down to Bath, and see an old woman who could not be long for this world. In a postscript, the writer added that she was to go to Bath the end of next week, and hoped to see him there on her arrival.

As Mrs. Theo had been saying she was not long for this world, ever since Fred could remember her, he was not rendered melancholy by this invitation—in fact, he set out for Northamptonshire, and, after travelling all night, got off the coach at the *Dragon of Wantley*, in excellent spirits. Having deposited his portmanteau and changed his dress, he presented himself at the Vicarage, where he was received with the utmost effusion by all but Susan, who was not there.

“Why, where is Miss Susan?” asks Major Digby, as soon as he perceives this omission. “Gone to make a drawing of the tablet? I’ll go and fetch her, and then I can see it myself.”

So saying, and disregarding all Mrs. Perkins’s representations that he had been all night on the coach, had probably taken nothing since he left Buckingham, and that it would be too dark to see anything in the church when he got there, the Major was off, promising to fetch Susan back in ten minutes’ time, and do justice to Mrs. Perkins’s hospitality.

The Major’s long legs soon brought him to the churchyard, whence a short cut among the grass-grown mounds, which marked where

“The rude forefathers of the hamlet slept,”

took him to the chancel door.

It stood ajar, and the Major, looking in, saw Susan sitting on a bench in the chancel, her bonnet lying on the floor beside her, her drawing-book in her hand. She seemed to be comparing what she had done with the original. It was a fine May evening, and a faint reflection fell on the tablet from the fast-setting sun, shining up into the roof through the west window at the farther end.

As he stood watching her, she let the book sink lower on her knees, and, getting out her pocket-handkerchief, began to carefully wipe up something, which Fred fancied might be a tear.

In endeavouring to ascertain this, he made a slight noise, at which Susan started, and let her book fall, as she jumped up in

a fright. There were tears in her eyes (which were blue and very like poor Will's), but there was a charming colour in her cheeks, as she exclaimed,—

"Oh, Major Digby, you frightened me to pieces ! I wanted to finish this before you came, and mother said the coach was sure to be late."

"I thought there would be just time for me to see how the tablet looks," said Major Digby, picking up the book. Then he drew Susan's arm into his, and turned with her towards the chancel wall.

"How do you like it?" he asked as they stood in this confidential attitude.

"Oh——" said Susan, in a most eloquent monosyllable.

"I've been thinking a good deal lately," observed Fred—when he had conscientiously examined every letter of the inscription. "I've thought I'd ask you something—and I wanted to ask you here—just as we are now. It seems appropriate, as I first heard about you from poor Will. Do you think, Susan, as you could like me ? I liked you the first minute ever I saw you."

When the Major returned with Susan (not more than half an hour later), her sisters instantly perceived that something had happened, and as instantly resolved to get it out of her at bedtime. But before then, Major Digby had requested an interview with the Vicar in his study, where he asked and obtained permission to pay his addresses to his daughter Susan. The Vicar called Susan in, to her great confusion, and solemnly blessed them both in good old-fashioned style.

Major Digby's adventures after he married Susan Perkins, though quite as interesting as anything that had yet befallen him, cannot here be so much as hinted at. It must suffice to say that Mrs. Theodosia did not leave him her money ; but I never heard that either he or Susan allowed this disappointment to trouble them much. I believe, indeed, that he was more put out, when Lord George Germaine was made a Viscount, for his eminent services during the American War.

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